



SAFETY ALERT

USE OF "BLACKHAWK" KARABINERS

Number: SA 03/10

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Who Should Read this: CEstOs, Top Level Budget Holders, MOD Project Managers, Organisations appointing Authorising Engineers (AE) and Authorised Persons (AP) including: Commanding Officers/Heads of Establishment, Defence Estates (DE) Deputy Directors (Estates), DE Advisors, DE Facility Managers and Maintenance Management Organisations, who are advised to draw it to the attention of the relevant Supply Chain organisations.	
When it takes effect: Immediately	When it is due to expire: No Expiry

1. Introduction:

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CONTENTS OF THIS ALERT WILL ENABLE COMPLIANCE WITH THE HEALTH & SAFETY AT WORK ETC ACT 1974 AND ITS SUBORDINATE REGULATIONS.

The appropriate MOD officer shall arrange for the Regional Prime Contractor (RPC)/ Maintenance Management Organisation (MMO) contractor or other persons responsible for controlling:

- a. access to Restricted High Places as defined in JSP 375 Vol 3 Chapter 7, or
- b. any aspect of Working at Height activity in connection with fixed access systems,

to carry out actions in accordance with this Safety Alert.

On MOD Establishments occupied by United States Visiting Forces (USVF) responsibility is jointly held by USVF and DE (USF). At base level this jointly managed organisation is to take appropriate action to implement the contents of this Safety Alert. Where this Safety Alert contains procedures which differ significantly from USVF practice, DE (USF) code of practice is to be issued.

2. Background

The use by MOD personnel of 'BlackHawk' Karabiners on the defence estate is to cease with immediate effect. 'BlackHawk' Karabiners are not official military equipment; however some military personnel have been using them for adventurous training activities, particularly abseiling and climbing. This instruction comes following a recent accident involving the use of this equipment after which the Army Directorate of Training and the RAF Training Group issued 'Stop Notices' forbidding its use.

Following the above, Defence Estates PTS (Structures Section) conducted an investigation into this equipment and determined that the connector did not comply with BS EN 362 or JSP 569, and therefore must not be used as Working at Height Personal Protective Equipment.

3. Requirement.

a. Where any Work at Height activity that comes under the provisions of JSP 375 Vol.3 Chapter 7 is to take place the Authorised Person (Working at Height) or the Authorising Engineer (Working at Height), before issuing a Permit to Climb, is to check with the Person in Charge of the climbing team that only connectors fully compliant with BS EN 362 are to be used. No "BlackHawk" Karabiners are to be permitted for use.

If the Person in Charge proposes to use "BlackHawk" Karabiners then the Permit to Climb shall not to be issued. The AP (WaH) or the AE (WaH) is to instruct that no climbing is to take place unless connectors that are compliant with BS EN 362 are used.

b. Where any Work at Height activity that is not covered by the provisions of JSP 375 Vol 3 Chapter 7 is proposed, the person(s) within the RPC/MMO charged with the implementation of a Safe System of Work is to ensure that operatives carrying out the works do not use the "BlackHawk" Karabiner. Under no circumstances shall equipment that is not conforming to BS EN 362 be used.