

## **SAFETY ALERT 30/04/2018**

### **4 METRE FALL CAUSED BY BACK-HOOKING/CHOCKING A LANYARD**

On the 21 April 2018 on a Western Australian Mine a 4-metre fall occurred when a user of fall-arrest equipment back-hooked/chocked his lanyard to an anchor point/steel structure prior to falling.

Outcomes: The double action hook (which is manufacture rated to 25kN with a breaking strength of 34kN) was cross-loaded on the steel work which caused the hook 'beak' (see image below) to snap in half resulting in a 4-metre fall and serious injuries.



Users are reminded of the manufacturers recommendations for safe use and advice given in AS/NZS 1891.4:2009 Industrial Fall-Arrest Systems and Devices - Selection Use and Maintenance which advises against back-hooking/chocking as an unsafe practice.

These double action catches are commonly used in the manufacture of fall arrest/working at heights/fall protection products and equipment by all manufacturers in Australia and around the world.

On notification of the incident, Australian Standards quality control procedures were carried out immediately in order to trace the harness and lanyard back to the original manufacturing batch testing and certificates of conformity, for all raw materials, manufacturing staff qualifications and relevant Australian Standards batch testing results, to ensure full compliance in order to notify customers of any possible quality control issues that could affect their employees. Saferight confirms all products were and are fully compliant to AS/NZS 1891.1 Industrial Fall-Arrest Systems and Devices – Harness and Ancillary Equipment.

Additional random batch testing was conducted on identical hooks to check compliance to strength test specified by AS/NZS 1891.1. All products tested, resulted in test results of 34kN, approximately double the strength requirements of AS/NZS 1891.1 (15kN). Please see images below.



### Recommendations:

1. Employers should re-confirm to employees required to wear fall protection equipment when working at height, of the risks of back-hooking/chocking and re-confirm the need for purpose-built anchor points and static line systems and/or the use of tie-off slings and karabiners for improvised anchor points on appropriate structures, etc.
2. Training organisations are recommended to emphasise the need to comply with manufacturer's instructions for safe use and to avoid back-hooking/chocking as a means of attaching a lanyard or sling to a structure.
3. Manufacturers of fall protection equipment are advised to assess the information covered by this safety alert and act accordingly (be aware).
4. Saferight wishes to re-confirm the importance of utilising Australian Standards certified fall protection equipment. Failure to do so disqualifies/inhibits the quality control procedures as specified in the Australian Standards 1891 series of documents regarding traceability to batch testing and recall procedures for each specific product affected, if deemed necessary.
5. The correct use of the above information will save lives.

**Images of what not to do:**



**Recommended Best Practice**



Please note the double action hook design in question has been in circulation for approximately 20 years. This design has been superseded by the new K5T triple action hook. See image below.



Yours sincerely



G.N.J. (MACK) McCORMACK

MANAGING DIRECTOR