

## **Info Log – May 2012**

### **Serious Injury on Parafan Descender**

#### The Issue

An instructor at a licensed centre was seriously injured on a fall from a parafan descender. He had replaced the cable on the device in line with the manufacturer's instructions as he had done on previous occasions. After completing the job he attached himself to it and, again following the manufacturer's instructions, undertook a test jump. The cable parted at the ferrule and he fell 9 metres to the ground, breaking his back.

#### The Outcome

Investigation found that the failure was a result of an incorrect ferrule on the replacement cable and not, strictly speaking, a failure of the fan descender itself.

The Health and Safety Laboratory tested a sample of the cables and the three tests all failed, two with a load of just 17kg and the third with a load of 30kg. It appears that the ferrules used were of the wrong type and were not sufficiently compressed and that the company's internal quality control didn't pick this up. The cables should conform to BS EN 13411/3 2004 + A1 2008 which, we understand, sets out the length of the ferrule and its diameter. This makes checking them pretty straightforward once a copy of the standard has been obtained!

No recall was issued so if any providers are using or holding cables they should check them.

The key lesson therefore seems to be that whoever the cables come from, using a test weight initially would be a sensible precaution rather than a human guinea pig!