



# Interagency Aviation TECH BULLETIN



**No. IATB 16-03**

**Date: July 14, 2016**

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**Subject:** Harness for doors-off operations from helicopters for Rappel, Plastic Sphere Dispenser (PSD), Aerial Capture, Eradication and Tagging of Animals (ACETA), etc.

**Distribution:** All Helicopter Operations

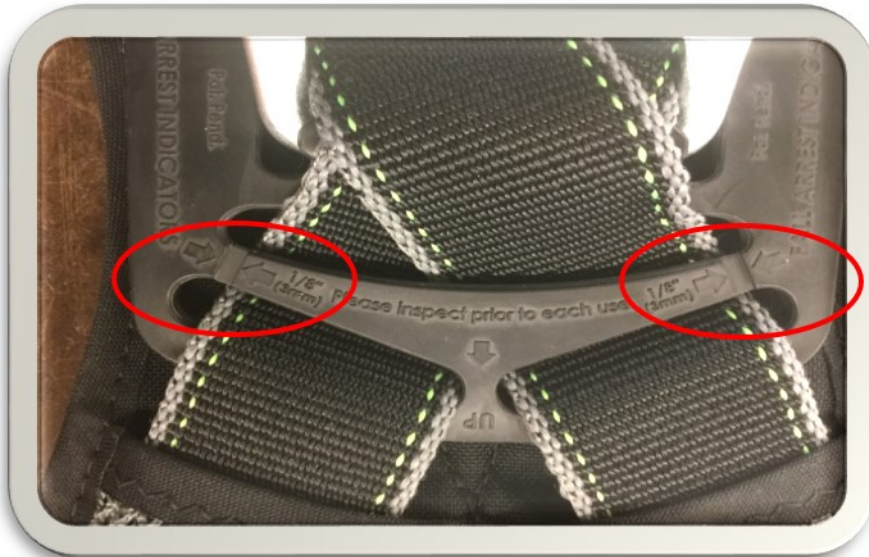
**Discussion:** A concern has arisen about the plastic back pad dorsal d-ring keeper portion of the Miller Revolution full body harness. This harness is used by multiple agencies for doors-off operations from helicopters (Rappel, PSD, ACETA, etc.). This harness incorporates a plastic webbing guide/ d-ring keeper over the fabric back padding. The main webbing straps are routed through this plastic keeper which has notches that will break indicating the harness has been subjected to a fall. If these indicator notches break, the manufacture requires the harness be removed from service.



There is another component to the plastic keeper that has a slot to retain the metal dorsal d-ring which, as the harness ages, tends to break away from the rest of the pad. This is a locating feature that is not a structural component of the harness. However the manufacturer does not advocate the use of harnesses that have this damage and is willing to replace this pad if the plastic tabs holding the d-ring retaining slot break. The caveat is the harness must pass an inspection performed by the manufacturer.



In Forest Service rappel operations, there are approximately 80 harnesses in service ranging in manufacture dates from 2006 through 2015. Most of the damage noted on these harnesses has occurred on harnesses manufactured before 2008. Although the manufacturer does not have a specific time life on their harnesses, the industry standard is 10 years. Harnesses over that time life should be retired.



The points circled on the Fall Arrest Indicator (left) also need to be inspected prior to each use.

Below is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and Occupational Safety and Health Administrations (OSHA) Life Expectancy Statement for the harnesses.

### **"Life Expectancy of Honeywell Harnesses and Lanyards branded both Miller® and North®**

ANSI and OSHA do not reference a maximum service life for synthetic fiber products. ANSI and OSHA standards require that the user remove the equipment from service if it has been subject to the forces of arresting a fall. They also state that when inspection reveals defects in, damage to, or inadequate maintenance of equipment, the equipment shall be permanently removed from service or undergo adequate corrective maintenance before return to service. Each harness and lanyard shipped by Honeywell Safety Products (Miller® and North® branded products) is accompanied by specific instructions for use, inspection, and cleaning that must be understood and followed. Instructions require that all fall protection products, including harnesses and lanyards be visually inspected prior to use and regularly inspected by a competent person, such as defined by ANSI and OSHA (Occupational Health & Safety Administration). When not in use, products should be stored in an area that is clean, dry and free of exposure to fumes or corrosive elements. Following these instructions may still necessitate removing the harness or lanyard from service prior to any life expectancy guideline, due to the normal wear and tear of everyday use. Likewise, proper adherence to the inspection and maintenance criteria may extend the useful life. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the end-user to determine when a harness or lanyard is unfit for use and should be removed from service.

Honeywell Safety Products 1345 15th Street - PO Box 271 - Franklin, PA 16323

Technical Service: 800 873-5242 – Tel: 814 432-2118 – Fax: 800 892-4078

[www.millerfallprotection.com](http://www.millerfallprotection.com)

TL 014 – ANSI/OSHA Life Expectancy Statement Rev 3, 06-04-2015"

Any questions or concerns, please contact; Kevin Brown, U.S. Forest Service Helicopter Rappel and Short Haul Equipment Specialist at 406-329-3958, [kkbrown@fs.fed.us](mailto:kkbrown@fs.fed.us) or Ward Hiesterman, Acting National Rappel Specialist at 406-579-9046, [whiesterman@fs.fed.us](mailto:whiesterman@fs.fed.us)

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