Document 2.1 Manufacturer inspection guidelines

This document sets out the Hilsen inspection protocol and the inspection assessment benchmark to be followed by an equipment inspector who is accredited by the manufacturer to inspect their products.

The program is based on the requirements set out in SANS 50365:2008 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – General requirements for instructions for use, maintenance, periodical examination, repair, marking and packaging and in particular Section 4.4: Instructions for periodic examinations; Section 4.6: Records; and Section 4.7: Periodic examination. (Reference: SANS 50365:2008 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height).

A person duly accredited by the manufacturer to conduct inspections under the Hilsen inspection program is 'a person or organisation authorised by the manufacturer' to conduct periodic examinations of their product in the field, in terms of SANS 50365:2008. (Reference: SANS 50365:2008 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height).

1. General guidelines

   1.1 The equipment inspector must hold current factory accreditation to assess product in the field (Reference: Manufacturer inspector accreditation document), in order to conduct a valid equipment inspection.

   1.2 The inspection method is visual inspection of all components and wherever possible (particularly with webbing components) a simultaneous tactile inspection (touch).

   1.3 Inspection assessment benchmark: In the opinion of the inspector, and with due regard to the latest periodic product test results, will the product, at this point and in its current condition, meet SANS specifications or, if not SANS approved, be safely used in the field for the purpose for which it is manufactured?

   1.4 Equipment will fail an inspection if the Hilsen inspection program inspector has cause to doubt that the product would meet the inspection benchmark.

   1.5 Equipment will pass an inspection if the Hilsen inspection program inspector is satisfied that the product meets the inspection benchmark.

   1.6 Any equipment failing an inspection is withdrawn from the field immediately. In terms of the SANS 50365:2008 definition of a competent person for periodic inspections, Section 3.3 Note 1: 'a competent person should initiate corrective action'. (Reference: SANS 50365:2008 Personal protective equipment against falls from a height, section 3.3 Note 1).

2. Guidelines for inspection of fall arrest systems

   2.1 A fall arrest system may include the following components, a safety harness, an energy absorbing lanyard set, a connector.

   2.2 Start the inspection with the labelling to ensure that the fall arrest system is not obsolete, and pertinent information is visible.

   2.3 Inspect the 'high wear components' of double action hooks, lanyard webbing, energy absorber cover and primary harness webbing. These components to be inspected thoroughly.

   2.4 Inspect double action hooks for any deformation. The spring-loaded hooks must close automatically. Excessive corrosion may have damaged springs or rivets.

   2.5 Inspect lanyard webbing for any cuts, holes or excessive abrasion. Look for webbing that is stiffened due to contamination by any foreign material. Bear in mind that excessive dirt will hamper ability to effectively inspect the webbing.

   2.6 Inspect the energy absorber cover for exposure of internal energy absorber webbing. Look for signs that the energy absorber may have been exposed to a fall. Ensure energy absorber cover has not been tampered with in any way.

   2.7 Inspect the 'low wear components' of secondary harness webbing, attachment points and buckles and stitch blocks.

   2.8 Inspect secondary harness webbing for significant damage. Secondary harness webbing could include all non-primary harness webbing such as waist belts, chest straps and harness step (if these features are present).

   2.9 Inspect attachment points and buckles for significant damage. Buckles must operate securely.

   2.10 Inspect stitch blocks for significant damage.

   2.11 Assess the fall arrest system as a whole particularly if it appears to be in poor general condition. An accumulation of independent borderline problems may lead to the fall arrest system being found unsafe for use.

   2.12 If the fall arrest system incorporated a connector between safety harness and energy absorbing lanyard set, inspect it.