Adran Rheoleiddio / Regulatory Department
Gwasanaeth Gwarchod y Cyhoedd
Public Protection Service
Rheolwr / Manager – John C Reynolds
Adain/Section: Iechyd yr Amgylchedd/Environmental Health

Gofynnwch am/Ask for: Manon H Griffiths
☎(01286) 682732
(01286) 682880
Swyddfa Ardal Arfon, Caernarfon, Gwynedd. LL55 1BN

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: MHG/GFR/25197/ 110002
Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Chief Executive Officer
Health and Safety Executive
Priestley House
Priestley Road
Basingstoke
RG24 9NW

4th July 2011

Dear Chief Executive Officer,

****CONFIDENTIAL****

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ETC. ACT 1974

I would be grateful if you could pass this information on to the appropriate Officers who have enforcement role within the health and safety division of your organisation. This letter is a follow on from a message released via EHC Net to ensure as full a coverage as possible of this message.

This Department is helping the police investigate a fatality where an 11 year old boy fell from a zip wire at a local attraction. It is hoped that through providing information on the circumstances leading up to the accident, Health and Safety Inspecting Officers will be able to identify potentially dangerous situations at similar establishments within their districts. I would ask officers to look specifically at rope attachments when carrying out inspections on establishments where ropes are used as part of the business e.g. high ropes, climbing walls, etc.

During our investigation into this accident, it has come to light that the accident was probably caused because of the client being 'mis-clipped' onto the zip wire. This took place because the company taped up the tail end of the lanyard rope back onto the main lanyard to make the ends neat and tidy. In order to explain this, please refer to the enclosed diagrams which should hopefully demonstrate the circumstances involved.

We therefore urge Health and Safety Enforcement Officers to familiarise themselves to this potentially dangerous practice that could exist elsewhere in the Country, and take reasonable steps to ensure that a similar incident does not take place in future.

If you wish to discuss this issue further, please contact Carys Lloyd Jones on 01758 704019 CarysLloydJones2@gwynedd.gov.uk or Manon Griffiths on 01286 682732 manong@gwynedd.gov.uk
Please bear in mind that this is an ongoing investigation and that this information is being shared to bring this practice to your attention and hopefully prevent another incident.

Yours faithfully,

Environmental Health Officer

Swyddfa Ardal Arfon
Caernarfon
Gwynedd. LL55 1BN
01286 673113
www.gwynedd.gov.uk

Digrams of Attachment Rope

The zip wire operated a system whereby 3 lanyards were connected to the trolley that rides the wire, using a single karabiner. The other end of one of these three lanyards, depending on the rider's height was attached via a karabiner to the harness of the rider. This single karabiner would be moved to the appropriate length lanyard for that particular rider.
The fixing point for the karabiner is a loop resulting from the use of a figure of eight knot. A loose tail results from the formation of the knot *(Fig. 1).*
During the investigation it came to light that the company taped up this tail end back onto the main lanyard rope to make the ends neat and tidy *(Fig. 2).*
In this instance, taping up the end resulted in a false loop developing during use *(Fig.3.)* This false loop could be confused for the actual connecting loop made using the figure of 8 knot. This actual loop is used to clip the harnessed person onto a zip wire, or similar rope course attachment.

This message is to make you aware of this practice which is a significant risk, similar to that which can arise if a stopper knot is not correctly located.

Fig. 1
(tail end loose)

Fig. 2
(tail end taped)

Fig. 3
(false loop formed)

Again, please bear in mind that this is an ongoing investigation and that this information is being shared to bring this practice to your attention and hopefully prevent another incident.