

HAZARD ALERT

Suspected Equipment Failure

Climbing Equipment



Incident

Recently there has been a serious injury at ANU, occurring in Tasmania, involving climbing equipment. The worker was tree climbing and using a climbing harness, ascender device and a separate descender device (pictured). At the time of the incident the worker had completed the ascending activity and had transferred the rope to the descending device whilst still attached to the ascending device. The descending device was attached and tested before the ascending device detached. Upon beginning the descent using the device, the worker experienced a sudden, rapid descent to the ground and suffered serious injury to their foot and ankle.

Issue

- Suspected failure of descending device;
- Further investigations ongoing.

History

- Inspection by worker prior to descent confirmed correct operation of the device;
- Worker was trained and had approximately 12 months experience using the device prior to incident.

Recommendations

To reduce the risks of similar incidents occurring it is recommended that:

- All equipment associated with climbing, rigging, suspension or weight bearing of people or equipment be checked and reviewed for compliance and correct and intended operation;
- Any faulty or suspected faulty or worn equipment be removed from service;
- Review of operating procedure, training and practices for climbing, rigging and suspension involving descending devices;
- Review of all rescue and emergency procedures for climbing, suspension and rigging activities; and
- Must use an additional or alternate safety line or device during climbing, suspension or rigging activities until further notice.

Take down: June 2017

Authorised by: Work Environment Group

Contact: whs@anu.edu.au for additional information

Staff and Students are reminded to report incidents to their supervisor and/or through the HORUS/ISIS online incident notification systems.