

Eisenberg, 24.03.2016

Safety note: Harnesses with Finsterwalder buckles ClickLock and T-Lock (according to safety note of Finsterwalder GmbH June 4th 2016)

The manufacturer Finsterwalder GmbH so far has not informed us as manufacturer of the following harnesses about safety issues nor named independence harnesses in their safety note in order to protect our customers!

independence harnesses with buckles carrying these article numbers are affected by that safety note:

HSI 60, HSI601, HSI630, HSI110, HSI17, HSI18, HSI162, HSI152, HSI15, HSI661, HSI66, HSI672, HSI671, HSI69 and HSI68.

We have used these buckles in the following prior harnesses:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| • Tigr 97 | certification number MZL GS-03-177-97 |
| • Magic / Magic 2000 | certification number MZL GS-03-178-97 |
| • Twix | certification number MZL GS-03-215-00 |
| • Flow | certification number MZL GS-03-218-00 |
| • Flexon / Flexon Airbag | certification number DHV GS-03-0241-01, GS-03-0242-01 |
| • Spider | certification number DHV GS-03-0323-05 |
| • Geko | certification number DHV GS-03-0342-06 |
| • Flash / Flash Cygnus | certification number DHV GS-03-0314-06, GS-03-0341-06 |
| • Duo | certification number DHV GS-0355-07 |
| • Acro | prior model without certification, manufactured until 2012 |

In those harnesses we have used either only the buckles mentioned in the safety note of Finsterwalder GmbH, or used them at least partly as leg belt buckles or breast belt buckles.

The affected buckles:



In order to put no pilot or passenger at risk, the harnesses mentioned above may only be used after checking the belt buckles properly, whether one of the Finsterwalder buckles shown above is in use.

If there is any other buckle system in use for one of mentioned harness models (e.g. AustriAlpin, Cobra or Finsterwalder HSI5XX or PL-Lock), you may continue to use your harness!

If one of the affected buckles is in use, you may only use the harness for the period given within the safety note of Finsterwalder GmbH, published at Munich, June 4th 2016:

- If an affected buckle is used as **breast belt buckle or Get-Up-System buckle:**
4 years operation period (effective from unit check date)
- If an affected buckle is used as **leg belt buckle:**
4 years operation period (effective from unit check date)

According to our current state of knowledge, we assume that the female as well as the male part of the buckles must be replaced in order to re-establish operating ability.

Finsterwalder GmbH does not offer a proposal for solution of that issue, yet!

Regarding the type affected harnesses affected, we assume that a replacement of the buckles will not be economically efficient. As manufacturer of the harnesses, we try to develop a refitting solution, which possibly avoids a replacement and enables you to keep on using prior harnesses.

We will inform you about the availability of a solution respectively about a replacement as soon as possible on our website www.independence.aero.

Stefan Kurrle, managing director

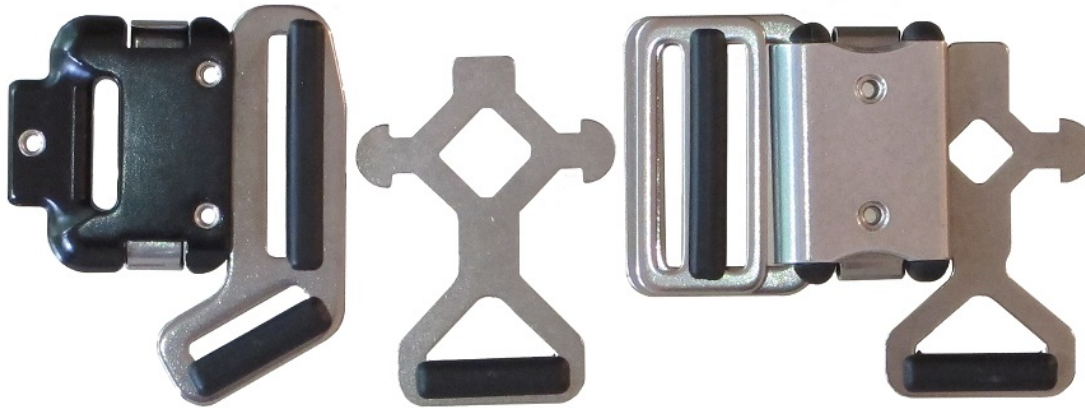
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SAFETY NOTE

Date 04.06.2016

Subject Safety notice for paraglider harnesses equipped with Finsterwalder CLICK-LOCK and T-LOCK buckles in the chest strap



In the past three months, there have been two incidents involving older paraglider harnesses equipped with CLICK-LOCK buckles (HSi10) in the chest strap. The buckles had opened unintentionally during flight while they were under load. In one of the cases this happened during a SAT maneuver (spreading of the chest strap due to the pilot resting on the riser), in the other case the reason was presumably the load applied by the body weight of the pilot who was hanging only in the leg straps.

Finsterwalder has conducted a technical investigation and found the following: The hooks of the metal tongue can wear out through the frequent diagonal load changes the chest strap is subject to. This might lead to decreased load capacity and – in the case of sufficiently high diagonal load transmission – the buckle might open unintentionally.

As a consequence of this finding, Finsterwalder has limited the respective buckles' service time to 4 years if they are used in paraglider chest straps. The harness manufacturers have already been informed accordingly.

To date, there have been no unintentional openings of T-LOCK buckles. However, since their mechanism resembles that of CLICK-LOCK buckles, the problem is likely to be the same.

Finsterwalder calls on all owners of harnesses equipped with CLICK-LOCKS (HSi10) or T-LOCKS in the chest strap to determine their buckles' previous usage time by checking the routine test date on the sample inspection label. If this date indicates a usage time of more than 4 years, the harness is not airworthy for now and may not be used for flying anymore. Affected owners should contact their harness manufacturer.

The service time limitation applies only to CLICK-LOCK and T-LOCK buckles that are used in paraglider chest straps. When used for applications where only static loads are involved, the CLICK-LOCK and T-LOCK buckles' service life is 10 years.

The following harness manufacturers have used the mentioned buckles in one or more of their models: Advance, AVA Sport, APCO, Finsterwalder & Charly, KARPO FLY, SKY Paragliders, SkyTrekking, SOL, Woody Valley. Besides the buckles are used in paramotor harnesses of several manufacturers.

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