Press information

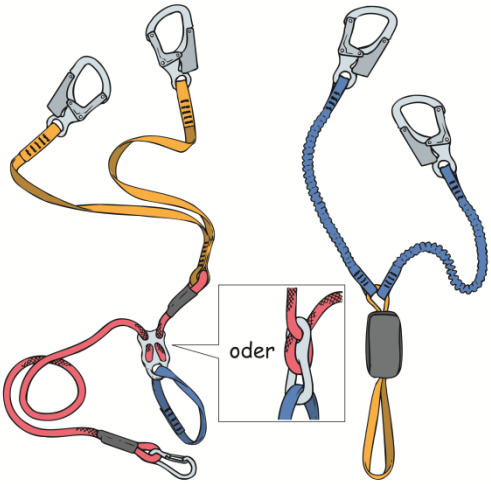
25 February 2013

Second wave of via ferrata set recalls within six months

Considerable deficiencies found in many via ferrata sets

Munich.- Tests carried out by the German Alpine Club's Safety Research Department (DAV Sicherheitsforschung) revealed that many of the via ferrata sets currently available have considerable deficiencies and, in the worst case, may break when the user falls. A list which summarizes the affected sets was recently compiled by the German Alpine Club in cooperation with the manufacturers. Users of via ferrata sets worldwide are strongly advised to check their sets on the basis of this list, and to return them to the manufacturer, if they are affected. Furthermore, all users of via ferrata sets should check whether their sets still have not exceeded the lifetime indicated by the manufacturer. Hence, it is the second time within six months that problems with via ferrata sets occur – though completely different systems are affected.

Which types of sets are affected?
The recent recalls concern via ferrata sets employing the rope friction technology (the set on the left in the sketch). These systems can be recognized by the metal plate through the holes of which a rope is guided.



The recall in August 2012 concerned several sets with elastic lanyards and tearing energy absorber (the set on the right in sketch). The recall list now available (see below) summarizes both recalls as well as the lifetime specifications provided by the manufacturers. **The Alpine Clubs strongly advise all users of via ferrata sets to check their sets on the basis of this list. Via ferrata sets affected by a recall must not be used any longer, but do have to be returned to the manufacturer. Sets which are not affected by a recall but have exceeded the lifetime indicated by the manufacturer must not be used any longer.**

What is the reason for the recent problem?
Via ferrata sets consist of two main elements – first, of the two lanyards which are clipped to the via ferrata cable by means of carabiners, and second, of the energy absorbing system. The energy absorbing system is connected to the lanyards and, in case of a fall situation, absorbs energy, thereby reducing the forces acting on the climbing harness, and thus on the user, via the girth hitch (the blue and yellow loop, respectively in the sketch). In absence of the energy absorbing system these forces would, in the worst case, be fatal or would cause structural parts to break.

Two types of energy absorbing systems are known – one type employs tearing energy absorbers, the other one employs the rope friction technology. Only the systems employing the rope friction technology are affected by the problem recently found. These systems use a metal plate provided with holes through which the brake rope is guided. Fall energy is compensated by the rope passing through the metal plate. Material aging, however, causes loss of the brake rope's flexibility. As a consequence, the friction in the system increases, leading to higher maximum forces acting on the energy absorbing system. At the same time, the lanyards lose strength due to use and aging. Finally, with certain via ferrata sets both effects in combination may lead to breaking in a fall situation. Due to the high significance of age and usage of the product, greatest importance must be placed on accurately observing the manufacturers' lifetime specifications.

Background
On 5 August 2012 a fatal accident happened on a via ferrata in Tirol, Austria. Due to continuous load, the killed person's via ferrata set had deteriorated to such extent that the lanyards could no longer withstand the fall and broke. An investigation carried out on the affected sets revealed that with some constructions frequent extension of the lanyards, which normally happens on a via ferrata, leads to weakening of the supporting fibers. A number of manufacturers reacted by issuing extensive recalls. In the course of the investigations on the elastic lanyards a great number of further tests was carried out with used via ferrata sets. In this process the manufacturer Mammut found significant deficiencies due to aging effects in their via ferrata sets employing the rope friction technology. Subsequently, the German Alpine Club's Safety Research Department carried out tests on used via ferrata sets provided by equipment rental stations and private users in order to get an idea of how grave the consequences of this problem would be. The tests revealed that via ferrata sets using the rope friction technology produced by various manufacturers partly have grave deficiencies and possibly do not withstand a fall. The German Alpine Club's Safety Research Department immediately informed the manufacturers and urged them to check their via ferrata sets. During a meeting of the UIAA Safety Commission held in early February 2013 the results were discussed, a joined course of action was agreed upon, and a common statement was set up. This statement reads:

Following a comprehensive test program conducted on used or aged rope friction based via ferrata sets the climbing industry has found that some of these sets can fail in a fall situation. The testing showed that the impact force in a fall may be increased and that the

tensile strength of the lanyards may also be reduced in such a way that it could result in a full failure of the via ferrata set. Severe injury or death may be the consequence.

The level of the risk is dependent upon the specific model. Therefore each rope friction based via ferrata set owner should consult the information provided by the manufacturer of the set.

In addition to this statement, quick changes of the UIAA standard 128 with additional requirements for via ferrata sets were agreed upon. The minimum final strength requirement was raised, and an additional fatigue test is carried out on sets employing elastic lanyards. For sets with non-elastic lanyards, fatigue strength of the lanyards must be proven by test or practical evaluation.

Contact:
DAV Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Thomas Bucher
089/14003-810
thomas.bucher@alpenverein.de

Recall Via Ferrata Set Date February 25th 2013

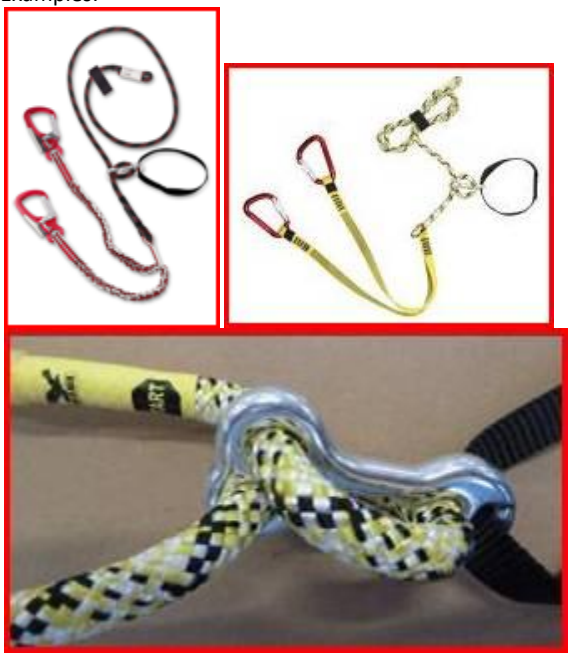
Issued by DAV Sicherheitsforschung

- All Via Ferrata sets using the rope-friction technology, which are affected by the recent recall, are listed based on the manufacturer's data.
- All sets with elastic lanyards that are affected by the recall from August/September 2012 are also listed. Sets which had already been exchanged by a manufacturer because of a recall are not concerned again.
- Do not use any affected set! The worst case is a rupture of the set.
- All details can be found on the manufacturers' homepages.
- The maximal recommended lifespan of Via Ferrata sets as specified by the manufacturers is also included in the list. By the end of this time sets have to be disposed of – with frequent use or visible damage earlier. A Via Ferrata set must be disposed of after one fall.
- **Only continue to use your Via Ferrata set if it is not affected by any recall and if it is within the lifespan specification of the manufacturer.**

Manufacturer **Link**	**Recalled Via Ferrata Set** **Type: Elastic Lanyards** (August/September 2012)	**Type: Sets using rope-friction technology** (February 2013)	**Maximal Lifespan** for Via Ferrata sets as specified by manufacturer and past recalls
Anlo Mountain anlomountain.com	-	-	Approx. 5 years
AustriAlpin austrialpin.at	▪ Colt I ▪ Hydra I	No recall but AustriAlpin's sets with a rope break as shown below must not be used any further because of obsolescence (produced before 2007).   AustriAlpin is willing to cooperate with users, further information can be found on their homepage.	Warranty: 2 years ▪ DB4 consider recall from August 2nd 2007
Black Diamond blackdiamondequipment.com	-	-	Shelf use: 10 years Lifespan: 2-5 years depending on how frequently it is used and on the conditions of its use

CAMP camp.it	-	-	Sets manufactured before 07/2007: max. 5 years 07/2007 – 02/2013: max. 10 years Starting from 03/2013: max. 5 years
CT climbingtechnology.com	▪ Top-Shell Spring Set ▪ Classic-K Spring Set	Under investigation – CT momentarily recommends not to use the following via ferrata sets: 2K372AA REVOLVING K-SET 2K372AC REVOLVING K-SET 2K53300 CLASSIC K-SET 2K5330D CLASSIC K-SET All sets produced in 2007 and earlier (see date on the label) exceed their lifetime and have to be disposed.	Never used: 5 years Occasional use: max. 3 years
Edelrid edelrid.de	▪ Cable Lite ▪ Cable Lite 2.0 ▪ Cable Comfort ▪ Cable Comfort 2.0 ▪ Cable Kit 4.0 ▪ Brenta Comfort ▪ Cable Kit Xtra-Light Schuster	The following via ferrata sets manufactured in the years from 2006 on and later (see homepage of Edelrid for identification) are affected by the recall: ▪ Brenta (without carabiner) ▪ Brenta de Luxe (with carabiner, batch number '06' and later) ▪ Tofana ▪ Civetta ▪ Brenta Comfort  All sets produced in 2005 and earlier (recognizable at the batch number of the carabiner, see homepage) exceed their lifetime and have to be disposed! EDELRID offers a bonus if those sets are disposed and a new one is purchased (see homepage).	Never used: 10 years Occasionally used (ca. 1-2 times a month): 5 years

Edelweiss *edelweiss-ropes.com*	▪ Upsilon EVO ▪ Upsilon EVO junior ▪ Upsilon EVO Swivel Performance ▪ Upsilon EVO Performance ▪ Upsilon EVO Swivel	-	Max. 10 years
Kong *kong.it*	-	-	Max. 500 days of use
LACD *lost-arrow.de*	-	-	Max. 10 years
Mammut *mammut.ch*	▪ Tec Step Classic ▪ Tec Step Bionic Turn ▪ Tec Step Bionic ▪ Tec Step Brenta Classic	▪ All Mammut Via Ferrata Sets according to figure:  (Via Ferrata V, Via Ferrata Y, Via Ferrata Performance Key Lock)	Never used: max. 10 years Rarley used (1-2 times a year): max. 7 years
Ocún *ocun.cz*	▪ Via Ferrata Y – form 'Harmonica' ▪ Via Ferrata Rip'n'stop 'Harmonica'	-	Sets manufactured before 09/2012: max. 5 years Sets from 09/2012 onward: Never used: max. 12 years Occasionally used (once a year): up to 10 years
Petzl *petzl.com*	-	-	Max. 10 years ▪ Consider inspection call of May 13th 2011
Rock Empire *rockempire.cz*	No measures taken	No measures taken	

Salewa *salewa.com*	-	▪ All Salewa via ferrata sets employing rope-friction technology Examples: 	Proper storage: up to 10 years Rarely used (1-2 times a year): up to 7 years
Simond *simond.com*	-	-	Sets with tear webbing energy absorbers: never used: 10 years Occasionally used: max. 7 years Sets with rope-friction break: max. 3 years
Singing rock singingrock.com	▪ Easy Go Xp ▪ Easy Go Xp Complete ▪ Easy Go Xp Lock	Under investigation, no final conclusion for the following sets: Via ferrata set Via ferrata set Complete via ferrata set Lock	Sets with tear webbing energy absorbers: max. 10 years Sets with rope-friction break: max. 5 years since the date of first use and 10 years after date of production, whatever comes first

Skylotec *skylotec.de*	-	-	Never used: 10 years Occasionally used: 6-8 years ▪ Consider inspection call of September 15th 2011
Stubai *stubai-bergsport.com*	▪ Connect Compact Mod. 1211, SN 498 ▪ Connect Flex Mod. 1211, SN 499	Under investigation – Stubai recommends not to use any via ferrata set which employs the rope-friction technology.	Rarely used (ca. once a year): max. 10 years Average use: ca. 5 years
Wild Country *wildcountry.co.uk/*	▪ Via Ferrata Set	-	Max. 5 years from first use on, or 10 years from first storage on

- No set affected by this recall.