

SN (NI) 2001/53

DATE: 13 December 2001

**For Attention and Action by:
Chief Executive of each HSS Trust
General Manager/Chief Executive of each HSS Board
Chief Executive of each Agency**



HEALTH ESTATES
ESTATE POLICY

**NORTHERN
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INCIDENT
CENTRE**

**TITLE:
INVACARE POWERED WHEELCHAIRS. RISK OF DRIVE WHEELS
BECOMING DETACHED FROM WHEELCHAIR DURING USE.**

MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER

Invacare Ltd

PROBLEM

This notice applies to the following Invacare models: Cruiser, Harrier HD, Harrier Special, Home and Away Special, Phoenix Plus, Spectra Plus and Spectra Special Powered Wheelchairs.

There have been a number of instances of powered wheelchair drive wheels becoming detached due to the central locking bolt working loose in service.

DISTRIBUTION

This notice should be brought to the attention of all who need to know or be aware of it, including those listed below, in accordance with local procedures. This will include:

- Liaison Officers
- Risk Managers
- Health & Safety Officers/Advisors
- Device Managers
- Medical, Nursing and Care Staff
- Ambulance Staff and Paramedics
- Wheelchair Service Managers
- Supplies Staff
- Outpatient Departments
- Accident & Emergency Departments
- General Medical Practitioners
- Professions Allied to Medicine
- Social Care Staff
- Community Care Staff

Boards/Trusts should ensure that if appropriate, this information is passed to all persons having the responsibility for the premises registered under "THE REGISTERED HOMES (NI) ORDER 1992.

ACTION

Identify any powered wheelchairs supplied since 1 June 2001 and ensure that rectification action is carried out in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions at Appendix A.

SAFETY

NOTICE



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BACKGROUND

Reports have been received by MDA and Invacare involving incidents in which a drive wheel has become detached from various models of powered wheelchairs. When this occurs the user is at risk of losing control of the wheelchair and of the wheelchair tipping over. The manufacturer knows which models are potentially affected and has issued a Safety Bulletin (No. T1004) dated 28th September 2001, to warn those customers who have received the wheelchairs. The problem covers a range of models manufactured between 1 June 2001 and 26 July 2001, Details of the models involved are shown at Appendix A. If you are not sure if the wheelchair is affected please contact the manufacturer who will check the serial number against their records.

The problem has occurred because a manufacturing operation to apply a thread locking compound was not properly controlled during this period. The purpose of this compound is to stop the wheel's central retaining screw from working loose in service . Without the thread locking compound the retaining screw will come loose and can, in time, fall out. The problem may not be seen by a user or carer until it is too late.

The manufacturer can trace all affected wheelchairs to their delivery point but, in many cases, local records are the only means of tracing the present end user.

Invacare has agreed to supply replacement screws and pay a fitting charge to recognised dealers and repair organisations. Invacare should be contacted at the following enquiry address to obtain replacement screws and check serial numbers as required.

ENQUIRIES

Enquires to the manufacturer should be addressed to:

Kevin Humpries
Director of Technical Services
Invacare Ltd
South Road
Bridgend Industrial Estate
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
CF3 3PY

Tel: 01656 647237
Fax: 01656 649016



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Enquires to the NIAIC should quote the reference number SN(NI) 2001/53 and be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)
Health Estates
Estate Policy Directorate
Stoney Road
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 1US
Marked for the attention of Mr Brian Godfrey

Tel: 02890 523714
Fax: 02890 523900
Email: brian.godfrey@dhsspsni.gov.uk

Brian Godfrey
NIAIC Manager

HOW TO REPORT ADVERSE INCIDENTS

Adverse Incidents relating to medical devices, non-medical equipment, plant and buildings should be reported to NIAIC as soon as possible. Advice on how to report is given in Safety Notice SN (NI) 2000/NIAIC. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided.

*Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
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