

SN (NI) 2002/23

DATE: 13 June 2002

**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
IRELAND
ADVERSE
INCIDENT
CENTRE**

TITLE:

**SCANDINAVIAN MOBILITY, POPULAR PLUS
POWERED WHEELCHAIR - RISK OF
OVERHEATING OR POSSIBLE FIRE IN THE
BATTERY CABLES AND CONNECTOR PLUGS**

MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER

Scandinavian Mobility Ltd (Now Invacare Ltd)

PROBLEM

NIAIC has been informed by the Medical Devices Agency (MDA) of reports of battery cables and battery box connectors becoming overheated. On one occasion a small fire was observed in a connector. Initial investigations have revealed that the connectors had not been refitted correctly when the wheelchairs were reassembled for use following transport, storage or maintenance.

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
- Estates Managers
- Wheelchair Service Managers
- Occupational Therapists (involved in wheelchair provision)
- Physiotherapists (involved in wheelchair provision)
- Rehabilitation Engineers (wheelchairs)
- General Medical Practitioners
- Social Care Staff
- Community Care Staff
- Wheelchair Repair Services
- Wheelchair Reconditioning Services
- Hospices
- Residential & Nursing Homes
- Loan Store Managers
- Day Care Services for Elderly or Disabled People
- Education and Library Boards

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

Trace all Scandinavian Mobility Popular Plus Powered Wheelchairs and arrange for the wiring looms and connectors to be inspected in line with the manufacturer's guidelines. Components should be replaced if any signs of wear, damage or discoloration are found.

Users and maintenance/repair personnel should be reminded of the need to properly reconnect the plugs and sockets in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

SAFETY

NOTICE

BACKGROUND

NIAIC has been informed that reports have been received by both the Medical Devices Agency (MDA) and Invacare Ltd (owners of Scandinavian Mobility) involving Popular Plus wheelchairs where there has been overheating of the battery cables and connectors. This happens when the battery cable connector plug and socket are not fully inserted, following disconnection to allow the wheelchair to be folded or for maintenance purposes. If the plug and socket are not fully connected this can result in an increased resistance within the connector which will eventually cause a heat build up during normal use. The problem will occur gradually and may not initially be apparent to the user.

The user instructions specifically include the need to: “ensure that the safety locking latch is firmly located over the retaining lugs. Failure to do so may result in overheating of the contacts”. These instructions should have been passed to the user/carer during the handover process. (NIAIC Safety Notice SAN 99/46 refers). Further copies of the user instructions can be obtained from Invacare if required.

Only the Popular Plus wheelchair is affected. Manufacture ceased approximately two years ago.

ENQUIRIES

Enquires to the manufacturer should be addressed to:

Kevin Humphries
Director of Technical Services
Invacare Ltd
South Road
Bridgend Industrial Estate
Bridgend
Mid Glamorgan
CF31 3PY

Tel: 01656 753270

Fax: 01656 649016

Enquires to the NIAIC should quote the reference number SN(NI) 2002/23 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) 2002/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided. Adverse Incident reporting forms and an on-line reporting facility are available on the NIAIC website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic

*Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Áisíneacht Feidhmeannach don Roinn Sláinte. Serbhísí Sóisialta agus Sábháilteacht Phoiblí*



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