

**SN (NI) 2002/31**

**DATE: 18 September 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:**

**STOLLENWERK AMBULANCE STRETCHER  
TROLLEYS - RISK OF FRONT LEG FRACTURE**

**MANUFACTURER/SUPPLIER**

Stollenwerk/Paraid Ltd

**PROBLEM**

The telescopic front legs can fracture in normal use when set to the highest adjustment mark (position 5), presenting a risk of sudden instability to all those using the trolley.

**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
- Ambulance Service
- Supplies Staff
- Independent Hospitals

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**

- Users of Stollenwerk stretcher trolleys should check during every periodic vehicle service for indications of cracking around the area shown in Annex 1; particularly those trolleys where the telescopic front legs have been set in position 5.
- It is not possible to check inner telescopic leg sections for signs of cracking **without dismantling** the telescopic legs, as the affected areas are shrouded by the outer leg sections.
- All inner legs showing signs of cracking must be replaced, as per Paraid Ltd's maintenance procedures, before trolleys are returned to service.

Paraid Ltd should be contacted if cracks are found, on the telephone number given below.

**BACKGROUND**

NIAIC has been informed by the Medical Devices Agency that they have received reports from the Ambulance Service in GB showing that the telescopic inner front legs can fracture in normal use before they are two years old

**SAFETY  
NOTICE**

When Stollenwerk stretcher trolleys have been set up and used continuously in the highest position of front leg adjustment (position 5), it has been found in some cases to result in stress cracks initiating at the end of the milled slot in the inner front leg. This is shown in Annex 1.

Trolleys that have been set up and used in the lower position 4 have not exhibited this problem.

These cracks may initially be very faint, hence the area must be examined thoroughly to enable them to be identified. Proprietary crack detection kits deploying dyes may help to identify these early indications of leg failure. It is advisable to perform any visual checking in natural light, not under workshop lighting conditions.

Failure to identify such cracks can result in the front leg fracturing with subsequent risk of injury to patients and paramedics when the trolley becomes unstable.

Paraid Ltd state that all trolleys' telescopic front legs must be replaced after a service life of five years. However, the adverse incidents received indicate this period may be too long and the inner legs should now be examined each time ambulances and their equipment are routinely serviced.

Records of these checks should be kept. The legs should be traceable e.g. with a label or bar code to identify how long they have been in service. When re-assembling the telescopic front legs it is imperative that fasteners are tightened to the correct torque as stated in Paraid's maintenance instruction. Paraid Ltd will replace all post-2000 front leg assemblies found to exhibit cracking, free of charge.

## ENQUIRIES

Enquires to the manufacturer should be addressed to:

Mr Darryl Smith  
Paraid Ltd  
Weston Lane  
Birmingham  
B11 3RS  
Tel: 0121 706 6744  
Fax: 0121 706 6746

Enquires to the NIAIC should quote the reference number SN(NI) 2002/31 and be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC), Health Estates, Estate Policy Directorate, Stoney Road, Dundonald, Belfast BT16 1US,

Tel: 02890 523714  
Fax: 02890 523900  
Email: [brian.godfrey@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://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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**SAFETY**

**NOTICE**

**ANNEX 1 – FRONT INNER LEG SHOWING  
AREA WHERE CRACKING INITIATES**

