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Crolles January 10th 2012

To: Whom it may concern

Object: Petzl statement on a special use of the Petzl Shunt

Context :

Since 1999 Petzl has provided specific information regarding the special use of the Petzl Shunt as a back-up device for industrial rope access. Petzl required that users must have received and mastered IRATA (Industrial Rope Access Trade Association) training or similar and must also use the Petzl Shunt within the current 'IRATA method'.

Extract from the June 2009 statement:

"Professional operatives who choose to use the Petzl Shunt as a rope access and work positioning back-up device **must have received and mastered IRATA training or similar, and must use the Petzl Shunt with IRATA method**. Responsibility for this remains with the employer and the user."

Analysis :

- In the light of incidents and accidents, indicative tests have been conducted, including – but not limited to – a workshop in March 2011, with rope access experts present. The findings of these indicative tests demonstrate that releasing a towing cord whilst towing a Petzl Shunt as a back-up device is not consistently effective :

- In an emergency situation the natural human reflex is to increase the grip on the cord and therefore reduce the likelihood of the cord to be pulled from the hand.
- Additionally this natural reflex may override any conscious action to open the hand and release the cord.
- Consequently, either of these hazards could result in overriding the braking function of the Petzl Shunt.

- Following these tests, working sessions with IRATA alerted Petzl to the fact that there has not been special training sufficient to minimise this potential risk. Testing and experience demonstrates that human response to emergency situations, even among expert users and highly trained professionals, is not completely predictable.

Conclusions :

- Previous Petzl statements required special training for this specific use of the Petzl Shunt. The lack of any described methods or such special training therefore makes these previous Petzl statements obsolete.
- As a measure of precaution, **Petzl recommends NOT to use the Petzl Shunt as a back up device in rope access whilst towed by a cord.**

This statement supersedes all previous statements and communications relating to this particular use of the Petzl Shunt

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