

Chris Fletcher - Independent Arborist and LOLER thorough examinations. 01/04/24

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The lifespan of climbing and rigging equipment for LOLER inspectors, arborists and ecologists – Quick reference

I suggest first reading the very well written article [“How-long-is-too-long”](#) by Matthew Cooper. Issue 183 of The ARB Magazine. December 2018 (link below)

This list was up to date at some stage and as you can imagine it's a lot of work to keep it updated. Take it as a guidance and always check with the manufacturer.

Lantra awards states that for LOLER a textiles maximum lifespan is 5 years in use and 5 years in storage prior to use which gives a maximum of 10 years from the date of manufacture. For metalwork it is when it wears out. However, it does give the caveat that you should always follow the manufacturers guidance. Most manufacturers do give a date of obsolescence and they can vary wildly from Lantra's statement.

The AA's ICoP (Tree Work at Height – 2020) says “Manufacturer's guidance should be referred to when assessing the lifespan of an item of equipment; the age, use and storage conditions will have a significant bearing on its continued use. Where manufacturers specify a lifespan, this should be adhered to. Any equipment outside the specified timeframe should be withdrawn from service. Lifespans may only be exceeded where manufacturers have granted special dispensation which can be evidence”

The PPE regulations state that a brand is regarded as the manufacturer as it is their “branded” product. This means that we have to go with the “Brands” lifespan over the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). For example, a Protekt rigging bollard states “for devices made mainly of metal the lifespan is unlimited on condition that periodic, annual inspections are regularly carried out” whereas Treehog who buy and re-brand it say the lifespan is 10 years from the date of manufacture (5 years if made before March 2023) We have to go with what Treehog say as legally, they are deemed to be the “manufacturer”.

The lifespans below are for some of the more common types of equipment that I see, they are the ideal maximum lifespans given by the manufacturer. Be aware that the ideal maximum lifespan is often only achieved if item is never used. Any use (UV exposure, rope on rope friction, dirt etc) will shorten the items actual working lifespan. An item could easily become unsafe or go out of date to use before its first use.

Most manufacturers say that the lifespan of metal items is limitless. The table on page 3 is for the anomalies which include the metal items.

Examples:

- Treehog say of their harness's “The lifespan of our soft items such as harnesses is 10 years from the date of manufacture, this date can be found on the harness. It is impossible to determine the lifespan once in use as this will depend on wear and tear and continual LOLER inspections” On that information you would presume that the harness has a potential lifespan of 10 years from the date of manufacture. However, the label attached to the harness says “Safe working life. not more than 5 years from date of first use and not more than 10 years from date of manufacture”.
- The Tree Austria 3.2 harnesses has information which goes from 1 to 12 years depending on how often it's used. Some of the words used to describe the 3.2 harness and its potential lifespan are: “intensive/daily/regular/seasonal/occasional/sporadic/maximum operating life/longevity/realistic application period/ When properly stored and without being used.” Each phrase has its own recommended lifespan and personal interpretation. The 12-year maximum lifespan only being achieved if the harness has been on a shelf in a shop for 2 years before you bought it then you stored it for 10 years without ever using it. (The new Stein Vega 2 harness which I think is also made by the same manufacturer (A. Haberkorn) has similar wording and lifespan)
- Teufelberger say for all of their rigging ropes: “Only if the rope is rarely used (one week a year) and stored correctly (see the section on transport, storage and cleaning) can its useful life be up to 5 years from date of manufacture. The year of manufacture can be depicted from the product label. If it is not possible to clearly state the age of the rope, it must be retired.
- Stein lowering capstans/bollards have a maximum working lifespan of between 2 and 5 years depending on how regularly its used. The New 2024 range with the blue caps is 10 years from manufacture.
- Treehog pulleys “Regarding the pulleys, I would suggest they marked them individually themselves and kept an equipment record. We do not mark individual serial numbers on our pulleys as it isn't a requirement of the regulations”.
- I would personally not buy these makes: Aaweal, AL-NASR, Alomejor, Alpidex, Aoneky, Asol, ASAT, Ayamaya, BeneLabel, Besthouse, Braveshine, Camnal, Dioche, Dropy, DXX-HR, Enjohos, F Fityle, Fauge, Focket, Freskaro, GM, G View, Inzopo, LanGuShi, LightenUp, Lixada, Magideal, NowDoar, NTR, P Prettyia, Pohove, QIQU, ShineTrip, SOB, Starke, SunniMix, Suntime, SUT, T TOOYFUL, Taglich, Toygogo, Tupa, Xinda, Yundxi, Z&W and ZOOK. Most of these makes have no CE certification available, no website, no serial numbers or date codes meaning that they are not “uniquely identifiable” or traceable. Ultimately, I'd say only buy kit from manufacturers or brands that you've heard of and only buy kit from reputable companies. Avoid buying cheap, untested, untraceable and potentially unsafe equipment on eBay, amazon, Alibaba, Aliexpress and Wish etc.

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Rope	Stated lifespan	Harness	Stated lifespan	Prusik	Stated lifespan
All Gear RIG	10 Use	3M	10 MFR	Arbpro	5 to 10 Use – 12 MFR
Arbpro	5 to 10 Use – 12 MFR	Arbpro	5 to 10 Use	Beal	10 Use – 15 MFR
Arb Response	3 months to 5 Use	Beal	5 Use – 10 MFR	Courant	3 months to 10 Use – 11 MFR
Beal	10 Use – 15 MFR	Buckingham	10 MFR	Cousin	3 months Use to 10 MFR
Courant	3 months to 10 Use – 11 MFR	Camp	10 Use – 12 MFR	Donaghys	3 months to 5 Use
Cousin	3 months Use to 10 MFR	Courant	10 Use	Dragon	3 Use
DMM	3 months Use to 10 MFR	Cresto	10 MFR	Dreevo	10 MFR
Donaghys	3 months to 5 Use	DMM	10 MFR	Edelrid	10 to 12 Use
Edelrid	10 to 12 Use	Dragon	5 Use - 10 MFR	English Braids	5 Use
English Braids	10 MFR	Edelrid	10 Use – 12 MFR	FTC	10 MFR
FTC	10 MFR	Edelweiss	10 Use – 15 MFR	Gleistein	6 to 8 Use
Gleistein	6 to 8 Use	G Force	10 MFR	Husqvarna	3 Use – 5 MFR
Husqvarna	10 MFR – 7 Splice	Harkie	5 Use – 10 MFR	Kong (Tendon)	10 Use
Liros	10 Use – 15 MFR	Hightec	10 MFR	Liros	10 Use – 15 MFR
Marlow	10 MFR	Husqvarna	10 MFR	Marlow	10 MFR
Rope Logic (HB)	Splice 7 Use – 10 MFR	IKAR	5 Use – 8 MFR	Samson	No info - 3 Use
Petzl	10 MFR	JSP	5 Use – 10 MFR	Singing Rock	3 Use
Samson	10 MFR	Komet	10 MFR	Stein	5 MFR
Stein ropes	5 Use - 10 MFR	Kratos	10 MFR	Sterling	10 Use
Sterling	10 Use	Notch	7 Use	Tango	2 Use
Tango	10 MFR	Petzl	10 MFR	Tendon	10 Use
Tendon	1 to 10 Use	Portwest	10 MFR	Teufelberger OD	2 Use – 5 MFR
Teufelberger PPE	10 MFR – 7 Splice	Ridgegear	5 Use – 10 MFR	Teufelberger OP	3 Use – 5 MFR
Teufelberger RIG	5 MFR	Sala	10 MFR	Teufelberger Sirius	5 Use – 8 MFR
Treehog	10 MFR	SAR	5 Use – 10 MFR	Treehog	10 MFR
Yale	10 MFR	Simarghu	5 Use – 10 MFR	Yale Silverstreak	0 to 3 Use – 8 MFR
		Singing Rock	10 Use – 15 MFR		
		Skylotec	10 MFR		
		Stein Vega	5 Use – 10 MFR		
		Stein VS2	Less than 1 to 10 Use – 12 MFR		
		Teufelberger Evo/S.light	5 Use – 8 MFR		
		Teufelberger Pro/Ess	10 MFR		
		Tree Austria	Less than 1 to 10 Use – 12 MFR		
		Tightline Magpie	5 Use – 10 MFR		
		Tractel	10 + Use		
		Tree-Force	10 MFR		
		Treehog	5 Use - 10 MFR		
		Willans	5 +		
		Zenith	5 – 10 MFR		

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Key for tables

Stated lifespan	Meaning
5 Use	Lifespan is maximum of 5 years from the date of first use (5 + is 5 years plus)
2 to 5 Use	Lifespan is 2 to 5 years from the date of first use (the actual lifespan depends on the frequency and type of use)
5 Use - 10 MFR	Lifespan is maximum of 5 years from the date of first use but no more than 10 years from the date of manufacture (whichever comes first)
5 MFR	Lifespan is no more than 5 years from the date of manufacture

Interesting ones	Lifespan
ART metal items	5/7/10 Use
Camp – Most items including metal	10 Use – 12 MFR
CT karabiners	Recommend 10 Use
Stein Invert-A-Wrap, RC1000, RC2000 Capstans	1 to 5 Use
Stein SMB1000, RC2001, 3001, 3002 Bollards	2 to 5 Use
Teufelberger slaiice	5 Use
Teufelberger spLIFE	7 Use (must have whipping)
Teufelberger OD prusik 7mm	2 Use
Teufelberger OP prusik 8mm	3 Use
Texora Mambo sling (Black)	3 Use – 5MFR
Texora TX/L Compact sling	7 Use
Treehog Hardware	5 MFR if made before 14/03/2023
Treehog Hardware	10 MFR if made after 14/03/2023
Treehog fixed cheek pulleys	No id - Year code only
Treehog rigging bollards	No id - Year code only
Stein rings – Harness bridge only	No id or year code
Stein rigging bollards (old)	No year code
ISC rings	No id or year code

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LOLER compliance (Things to look out for)

Issue	Manufacturer	What	Why
Can pass if marked	CT	Rings	Used on Stein V2 harness. No serial number
Can pass if marked	ISC	Steel and aluminium rings	No serial numbers
Can pass if marked	Skylotec	H-173-TRI karabiners	No serial number
Can pass if marked	Treehog	Rigging Bollards	5 or 10 years. See below
Can pass if marked	Treehog	Pulleys	No serial number
Short life	ART	Metal items	5, 7 or 10 years in use
Short life	Stein	All textiles	5 years in use
Short life	Stein	Lowering bollards - SMB1000, RC2001, 3001, 3002	2 to 5 years in use (no date code on older ones) - <i>Not SMB 1000 and LD 2024</i>
Short life	Stein	lowering capstans - Invert-A-Wrap, RC1000, RC2000	1 to 5 years in use (no date code on older ones)
Short life	Teufelberger	OP and OD prusiks	2 and 3 years in use
Short life	Teufelberger	Rigging ropes	5 years from date of manufacture
Short life	Treehog	Metal items	5 years from manufacture if made prior to 03/2023
Take note	Courant	Ropegrab	Can only be used on a Courant wire core flipline
Take note	Notch	Glide ropegrab	Only for use on ropes not wire core lanyards
Take note	Petzl	Grillon/Zillon set up	Can only be used with Grillon/Zillon Longe lanyard
Take note	Stein	Mini rope grab	Can only be used on specific stein ropes
Take note	Stein	Rings (ISC)	Only for Stein harness bridge
Take note	Stein	Rope splice. spLIFE	5 Years from manufacture
Take note	Treehog	Metal items	10 years from manufacture if made after to 03/2023
Take note	Treehog	Rings	Only for Treehog harness bridge
Won't pass	All	All	Any items that are not "uniquely identifiable"
Won't pass	All	PPE	Not CE certified
Won't pass	All	Prusik cord bought by the meter and hand-tied	No performance criteria - <i>PPE regs 2018</i>
Won't pass	All	Splices that you have made	No performance criteria - <i>PPE regs 2018</i>
Won't pass	Bulldog	Bone	No CE certification
Won't pass	Most MFR's	Metal items	Metal items that have been marked with a serial number
Won't pass	Notch	Slicpin	Not CE certified
Won't pass	Singing Tree	Roperunner - non-CE version	No CE certification

- *UKPN (UK Power Networks) workers are unable to scribe/etch a mark their metal items to give them a serial number as UKPN do not allow kit to be secondary marked.
- *Contact the manufacturer as to how to mark the item. Generally scribing into the metal is not allowed. Treehog allow the item to be marked with a permanent marker.
- If you are adding rings to your harness bridge then either use the rings that the harness manufacturer recommends/sells or go with a fully compliant (stand-alone) PPE ring such as DMM or Petzl. Other fully LOLER compliant rings are available but from my experience of almost 2500 kits LOLER inspected. If I saw 100 fully compliant rings, I'd expect 85 of them to be DMM, 13 of them to be Petzl and the other 2 to be other brands.