

STOP USE ADVISORY TO THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY COMPATIBILITY OF POWERED CLIMB ASSIST SYSTEMS WITH CLIMBING LADDER FALL ARREST SYSTEMS

In the interests of worker safety, 3M Fall Protection (“3M”) hereby notifies the industry that 3M does not permit powered climb assist systems (PCAs) to be used in conjunction with 3M’s Climbing Ladder Fall Arrest Systems (CLFAS)¹, unless such PCAs are verified by 3M as being compatible with 3M’s CLFAS. Absent such verification, 3M urges you to discontinue use of PCAs in conjunction with 3M’s CLFAS systems. PCAs are accessory systems and are not fall arrest systems.

3M previously alerted the industry in April 2019 to its concerns about compatibility based upon reports of incidents in the field and the concern identified in the ANSI/ASSE Z359.16-2016 standard for Climbing Ladder Fall Arrest Systems (CLFAS):

A2.1 Climb Assist Systems. Because of possible compatibility concerns, the competent person should consult the manufacturer of both the climb assist system and the CLFAS to determine if the systems are compatible. Considerations include connections to the user’s harness, spacing between systems on the climbing ladder, assist level settings, number of users and test records.

In order to protect workers from the risk of serious injury or death due to incompatible systems, 3M has attempted to work with manufacturers and customers in the wind energy industry to reach agreement over compatibility testing. To date, the development of an appropriate testing protocol and the subsequent testing have not been completed. 3M will continue working with manufacturers and customers willing to participate in efforts to establish a protocol for compatibility testing and will cooperate and assist with such testing in an ISO certified laboratory (which includes ANSI Z359.16 in its scope of certification) covering all foreseeable use scenarios of PCAs when used in conjunction with CLFAS systems.

In the interests of worker safety, unless a PCA system has been verified by 3M as being compatible with 3M’s CLFAS systems, 3M directs you to immediately discontinue use of such PCA system with 3M’s CLFAS. Note that manufacturers and owners of wind towers are responsible to verify compatibility between their PCA and CLFAS systems.

User inquiries about equipment compatibility should be directed to 3M Technical Service at 3MFallProtectionTech@mmm.com.

¹ Specifically, this Stop Use Advisory applies to 3M’s DBI-SALA® Lad-Saf™ and Cabloc™ vertical lifeline fall arrest systems (including Lad-Saf, Lad-Saf X2, Lad-Saf X3, Lad-Saf X3+ and Cabloc/Cabloc Pro sleeves, as well any DBI-SALA, Protecta or Uniline branded climbing fall arrest system).