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Products, training and operational support services for professional work at height and rescue

heightec Covid-19 Cleaning & Disinfecting Advice

In light of the current situation regarding the Covid19 pandemic we recognize that our customers are concerned about how they can ensure their heightec products are cleaned and disinfected.

To **clean** heightec PPE or other equipment, please follow the information provided in the product User Instructions.

To **disinfect** the product you have a number of choices:

1. **Simplest and least damaging for all equipment** - Quarantine the product for 72 hours.

2. **Metal products**

   The preferred method to disinfect all heightec metal products is the application of 90% isopropyl alcohol (IPA) with a clean cloth to all exposed high-touch surfaces. 70% IPA may be used as an alternative, but additional drying time will be required. This method is an ideal option to remove the risk of disease transmission without going through a full wash and dry procedure. Please read all warnings provided with the Isopropyl alcohol IPA to ensure proper handling.

3. **Textile products, including ropes**

   Wash in 25℃ - 30º C clean water with liquid soap with a pH range 5.5 to 8.5 for 15 – 30 minutes. After rinsing the textile product should be hung up to dry. Elevated temperatures (greater than 40º C) should not be used to dry the product. Based on the current guidance from the WHO, we believe this would be effective in combating Covid19, as soap breaks down the virus's lipid shell rendering it unviable. To wash textiles, immerse the product in soapy water and agitate well. The textile may be left to soak allowing the soap solution to fully penetrate the fibres. The product should be rinsed thoroughly to remove any soap residue. The residue will not harm the textile **but may alter the friction properties** (in ropes for example) **which could cause unintended consequences in use**.

4. **Ropes specifically**

   Wet nylon rope will be weaker than dry and will have less ability to absorb the energy of a fall. Nylon ropes will shrink and become firmer after washing, this is normal. Normal laundry detergents are **not** recommended due to the presence of additional chemicals such as surfactants and optical brighteners. If nothing else is available, then detergents can be used as these additives are not anticipated to affect the strength of the rope however, **they could cause the rope to be more susceptible to moisture and other minor effects**.

5. **Use of disinfectant chemicals**

   If necessary use a disinfectant compatible with polyamide and polyester. Use diluted and rinse thoroughly in clean water. A list of chemicals that have been tested on synthetic fibres to test how they react can be downloaded from our website.

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IPA has been tested on type 6 Nylon ropes including Static ropes and brief exposure has been shown to have only a small effect (no decrease in breaking strength for Polyester ropes, and only 2-4% decrease for other ropes tested) on the performance. In the study the tested ropes were made of different materials (Nylon, Polyester & Dyneema®). Each rope was disinfected once by being submerged in a solution of 70% IPA and 30% distilled water for 3 minutes and then left to air dry naturally for 48 hours before being tested for their residual strength.

Therefore, it is acceptable to disinfect ropes with a spray of 70% IPA and water solution. This should not be done on a regular basis though as IPA can be absorbed by Nylon fibres and may act as a plasticiser weakening the ropes over prolonged exposure. Any washing or disinfection of ropes will cause them to be degraded slightly if only by the mechanical action of washing and that the handling and flexibility of the rope does deteriorate after the disinfection. The process should therefore be done as little as is possible. Disinfection should be done when needed and not daily - the long term impact is being tested.

6. **In the specific case of COVID-19**

Hospital disinfection methods typically involve high temperatures (>150°C) or low temperatures (<100°C) and using bleach. We cannot recommend applying these protocols to heightec PPE. To date, no health authority has announced an official, reliable disinfection protocol using low temperatures (<100°C) and without bleach. Heightec is unaware of any disinfectant that has been scientifically proven to both safely disinfect and not degrade the porous synthetic materials often used to manufacture height safety equipment.

Following this guidance should reduce the risk of contamination but of course is not 100% guaranteed.

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