

Safety Knife Webbing Cutter Policy

Crelling Harnesses recommends that organisations and individuals using vehicle harnesses consider carrying a suitable safety knife webbing cutter within the vehicle to assist with the rapid release of a harness wearer following a road traffic collision or other incident requiring urgent passenger evacuation.

This is not a mandatory requirement; however, organisations and individuals may wish to consider carrying a safety knife webbing cutter as part of their risk assessment process, particularly where harnesses fitted with steel safety buckles are used.

Companies and individuals are responsible for carrying out their own risk assessments regarding the use, storage, accessibility and maintenance of both harnesses and safety knife webbing cutters.

Please refer to your own organisation's policies and procedures prior to purchasing or using safety knife webbing cutters.

We recommend that the following information is considered during the risk assessment process for the use of safety knife webbing cutters.

- Safety knife webbing cutters contain an enclosed metal blade designed to cut through the webbing of safety belts and harnesses to facilitate the rapid removal of a passenger during an emergency. We recommend that all drivers, passenger assistants, carers and relevant staff members are familiar with the purpose and operation of safety knife webbing cutters. They should also be made aware of the location of all safety knife webbing cutters carried within the vehicle. Staff should receive appropriate instruction regarding the location, purpose and safe use of safety knife webbing cutters, including when their use may be appropriate during an emergency. Organisations are responsible for determining the level of instruction or training required for their staff based upon their own risk assessment and operational requirements.
- It is advisable that safety knife webbing cutters are kept in the same location within the vehicle at all times to reduce confusion during an emergency. The location should be out of sight and reach of harness wearers where appropriate, whilst remaining readily accessible to authorised persons responsible for assisting passengers. The quantity and positioning of safety knife webbing cutters should be determined through the organisation's or individual's risk assessment. Some users choose to display signage or stickers indicating that safety knife webbing cutters are carried within the vehicle and identifying their location.
- Safety knife webbing cutters supplied by Crelling Harnesses feature a high-visibility enclosed blade design intended to help minimise accidental contact with the cutting edge during normal handling. Safety knife webbing cutters are also available from other suppliers; however, designs, colours, durability and operating characteristics may vary.
- Safety knife webbing cutters are intended solely for emergency situations and must not be used for the routine removal of harnesses or safety belts.
- Use of a safety knife webbing cutter will irreparably damage the safety belt or harness being cut and should only be undertaken during a genuine emergency, such as a road traffic collision or where a buckle or restraint mechanism cannot be released by normal means.
- Care should be taken to avoid injury to the harness wearer when using a safety knife webbing cutter. Where practicable, the webbing should be tensioned and cut away from the body.
- Any harness or safety belt that has been cut must be immediately removed from service and replaced. The safety knife webbing cutter should be inspected following use and replaced if damaged or showing signs of wear.

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- The suitability of carrying safety knife webbing cutters should be considered as part of the organisation's or individual's risk assessment, including who may have access to the cutter during transport and the arrangements necessary to ensure its safe storage and use.
- Safety knife webbing cutters should be subject to regular inspection and maintenance checks to identify any damage or deterioration. Examples may include damaged handles, cracked casings, loose blades, corrosion or any defect that could affect safe operation. Any damage should be reported to the responsible person and the safety knife webbing cutter should be replaced immediately.