



Summary of Manufacturers'
stated maximum life for
obsolescence of Recreational
Climbing Equipment.
– 2nd Edition (Dec 2023).

www.rockandwateradventures.co.uk

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Maximum life for obsolescence is the latest possible date, subject to detailed conditions, that the Manufacturer states that the product should remain in service.

To reach this maximum life for obsolescence date the product must be fit to remain in service from a visual and tactile perspective, and therefore also be free from:

- any damage,
- deformation,
- adverse contamination,
- excessive wear,
- obvious signs of UV degradation e.g. bleaching or discolouration,

With all details / marking of identification (E.g. CE marking, batch reference, individual serialisation – where present etc.) being clear and readable.

Where products are permanently attached to other products (for example fabric and metal products such as quick draws or Via Ferrata lanyards), then please refer to the Manufacturer's instructions for the complete product. Likewise, some specialist equipment from the detailed manufacturers has a maximum life for obsolescence much shorter than the more general one detailed here, therefore always check with the manufacturer's specific instruction state for the specific product.

It should be noted that many things can shorten the lifespan of a product, and the lifespan could be as short as first use, or even earlier if damaged (e.g. in transit) prior to first use.

An increasing number of manufacturers (Grivel, Ocun, Mammut, Salewa, Tendon and Wild Country for example) are trying to manage consumers expectations of how long a piece of equipment would be expected to last based on usage. This example below is Mammut's suggestion:

Frequency of Use	Approximate durability
Never Used	Max. 10 years
Once or twice a year	Up to 7 years
Once a month	Up to 5 years
Several times a month	Up to 3 years
Every week	Up to 1 year
Almost daily	Less than 1 year

All Manufacturers advise that all climbing equipment is regularly inspected and maintained by someone who has been trained and deemed competent to inspect equipment and to judge whether it can remain in service.

Two manufacturers – Singing Rock and Rock Empire have even gone as far as documenting how their recommendations have changed over time on their websites.

Lifetime of Singing Rock products

Every piece of fall protection PPE has a lifetime, which is given by the manufacturer and specified in the instructions for use for that product. Singing Rock specifies the lifetime of its products as follows:

Date of production	until 31/12/2004	from 1/1/2005	from 1/1/2008	from 1/1/2009	from 1/1/2015
Harnesses	5 ^{**} /10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /12 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /15 ^{***} yrs.
Textile PPE	5 ^{**} /10 ^{***} yrs.	5 ^{**} /10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /12 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /15 ^{***} yrs.
Ropes	5 ^{**} /10 ^{***} yrs.	5 ^{**} /10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /12 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{**} /15 ^{***} yrs.
Metal PPE	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	limited functionality (damage or detrition)	limited functionality (damage or detrition)	limited functionality (damage or detrition)
Helmets	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.	10 ^{***} yrs.

^{**} from the date of first use

^{***} from the date of production providing all conditions of storage according to the instructions of use

See <https://www.singingrock.com/lifetime-of-ppe>

The maximum life for obsolescence of each type of product listed below, was collected from the Manufacturers websites/workbooks and product instruction guidance booklets. Please note that these can be amended and changed by the Manufacturers at any time and that this list is for guidance purposes only.

It is worth noting that some manufacturers have stopped producing certain items, so their information has been removed, while others have changed their guidance since the last version of this document was published in 2018. Those manufacturers that have changed their guidance can be identified by the red text.

When a new item of equipment enters service, it is worth checking the details within the attached product instruction guidance and working to that, as well as ensuring that the equipment is maintained and stored properly, as per the manufacturer's guidelines.



Helmets

3 years use.

Stubai
Sweet Protection (triple rated helmet)

5 years use.

Trango

5 years from first use, 10 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

AustriAlpin

10 years from manufacture.

Black Diamond
Dynafit (triple rated helmet)
Mammut
Ocu
Petzl
Salewa
Simond
Singing Rock
Wild Country

10 years use.

Grivel

10 years from first use, 12 years from
manufacturer, whichever comes first.

C.A.M.P. / Cassin
Climbing Technology
Kong

10 years from first use, 14 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

Edelrid

10 years from first use, 15 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

Beal
DMM
Edelweiss
Rock Empire

Slings

5 years from first use, 10 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

Blue Ice
Trango

10 years from manufacture.

Black Diamond
Cousin Trestec
DMM
Fixe
Grivel
Lyon Equipment
Mammut
Metolius
Ocu
Petzl
Salewa
Simond
Stubai
Wild Country

10 years from first use, 12 years from
manufacturer, whichever comes first.

C.A.M.P./ Cassin
Climbing Technology
Kong

10 years from first use, 14 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

Edelrid

10 years from first use, 15 years from
manufacture, whichever comes first.

AustriAlpin
Beal
Edelweiss
Rope Empire
Singing Rock



Ropes

5 years use.	Metolius
5 years from first use, 10 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Blue Water Ropes (Dynamic) Trango
10 years from manufacture.	Black Diamond Cousin Trestec English Braids Fixe Mammut Marlow Ropes Ocuñ Petzl Salewa Sterling Rope
10 years from first use, 12 years from manufacturer, whichever comes first.	C.A.M.P./Cassin DMM
10 years from first use, 13 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Blue Water Ropes (Low Stretch)
10 years from first use, 14 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Edelrid
10 years from first use, 15 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Beal Climbing Technology Edelweiss Rock Empire Simond Singing Rock Tendon

Metal Climbing Equipment

10 years from manufacture.	Grivel Stubai
Theoretically indefinite, but advised replacement after 10 years.	Climbing Technology Simond
No Known maximum life for obsolescence, and only the condition of the product is applicable.	AustriAlpin Beal Black Diamond C.A.M.P. / Cassin DMM Edelweiss Edelrid Fixe Kong Mammut Metolius Ocuñ Omega Pacific Petzl Rock Empire Salewa Singing Rock Sterling Rope Trango Wild Country



Harnesses

5 years use from first use.	Stubai
5 years from first use, 10 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Trango
10 years from manufacture.	Arc'teryx Black Diamond Blue Ice DMM Fixe Mammut Metolius Ocu Petzl Salewa Simond Wild Country
10 years from first use, 12 years from manufacturer, whichever comes first.	C.A.M.P. / Cassin Climbing Technology Kong
10 years from first use, 14 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Edelrid
10 years from first use, 15 years from manufacture, whichever comes first.	Beal Edelweiss Grivel Rock Empire Singing Rock

Retirement options

All Manufacturers recommend that all climbing equipment upon reaching its maximum life for obsolescence should be removed from service and undergo a recorded controlled disposal, putting the equipment permanently out of use in an environmentally responsible manner.

Options for recycling include:

Scavenger <https://madebyscavenger.com/>

Green Peak Gear <https://greenpeakgear.org/about/>

Dirtbags <https://dirtbagsclimbing.co.uk/>

Yes Recycling - Hard Hat Recycling <https://yesrecycling.org/hard-hat-recycling/>

One option for repurposing ropes would be creating a rope mat for your house. Edelrid provide information here on how to achieve this - <https://edelrid.com/gb-en/vertical-freedom/edelrid-news/tips-ideas-knowledge/creative-rope-mat>

Statutory Regulations and Equipment Inspections in the United Kingdom

All Equipment used for recreational climbing in a professional context (climbing walls, outdoor centres, schools etc.) must meet the following regulations:

- [Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998 \(PUWER\)](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment at Work 1992 \(2022\) Amendment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment 1998 \(LOLER\)](#)
- [Working at Height 2005 \(2007\) Amendment \(WaHR\)](#)

WaHR has some general principles and LOLER has specific guidance about selection, use and inspection of equipment used for working at height, as well as inspection frequency. This includes (but is not limited to) all climbing wall fixtures and fittings such as lower-offs and running belays; all climbing equipment used by employees in the course of their work. While PUWER has the specific requirement for an acceptance/insertion check before equipment is used for the first time. This is important for identifying manufacturing defects or damage that has occurred during transportation.

In all cases, equipment must:

- Have adequate strength. In particular, anchors must be able to withstand forces imposed on them;
- Meet standards relevant for intended use (i.e. PPE should be CE marked); and
- Be uniquely identifiable.
- Suitable for the purpose for which it is intended to be used
- Regularly inspected
- Properly maintained pursuant to a dedicated maintenance schedule

In a recreational context, such as a climbing or caving club, if the club holds its own stock of equipment that is lent out to / or used with its own members, then the club would be expected to take reasonable steps to check this equipment is safe to use.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/leisure/amateur-sports-club.htm>

Who can carry out an Examination/Inspection?

During each session, there is a legal requirement on each instructor to complete a pre-use check. The operator must ensure that the instructor has also been provided with such information, instruction and training as necessary so that they are competent to carry out the work safely and that the equipment is to be used and is being used within the scope of the manufacturer's instructions.

Employees must be aware of and understand:

- The risks that the equipment will avoid or limit;
- How to correctly and safely use the equipment;
- How to conduct a simple visual/tactile pre-use check to ensure that equipment is safe to use.
- The procedure in which to follow if damaged, faulty or non-specified equipment is identified



In addition to the pre-use check by an instructor. A competent person must inspect equipment upon entry into service and then on a regular basis thereafter. In order to meet the Lifting Operations, Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) this inspection should occur at very least every six months. These inspections are detailed examinations and must be completed by a competent person.

This must be done in accordance with a schedule drawn up by the competent person, taking into account the recommendations of the manufacturer/supplier. Unless specified otherwise in an inspection schedule drawn up by a competent person, inspections should take place at a minimum of every six months. Certain factors such as volume of use and positioning of wall fittings may lead to a higher rate of wear and require more frequent inspections. As an example, a busy centre or climbing wall may inspect karabiners and belay devices on a monthly basis and ropes and harnesses weekly.

All formal inspections must be recorded, while an instructor's pre-use check does not. An additional interim inspection may be required following any incident or exceptional circumstance (when the equipment has been put through an experience that is not routine) that could affect the safety of the equipment.

Each formal inspection must be recorded in an Inspection Report, which must be kept for at least three years, though it is advisable to keep records for the whole life span of the individual piece of equipment. Individual inspection records should be kept at least until the next inspection. Equipment transferred between businesses must have clear indication of when it was last inspected.

In the case of a reported incident or a suspected incident, inspection records should be retained for at least three years in the case of an incident involving an adult, or in the case of a minor having been involved, till three years after that person's 21st birthday!

Who is deemed a 'Competent person'?

HSE guidance states that a competent person is one who has the appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience to enable them to detect defects or weaknesses and assess their importance in relation to the safety and continued use of the equipment. This is left for the operator to be able to evidence in an appropriate way, meaning that they will need to develop an appropriate person specification, based around the required **Skills, Knowledge, personal Attributes, Training and Experience.**

Although the competent person may often be employed by another organisation, this is not necessary, provided the employee is granted sufficient authority by the operator to ensure that in-house examinations are made without fear or favour. However, this should not be the same person who undertakes routine inspection of the equipment - as they would then be responsible for assessing their own inspection work.

The purpose of any inspection is to detect defects or deterioration that may give rise to hazards and to take appropriate corrective action. Any inspection check schedules for equipment should be done in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

About the Author

Paul Smith has been an active climber for over 25 years and currently runs Rock and Water Adventures. He specialises in providing Technical Advice to range of climbing walls, centres, schools and small businesses, alongside the delivery of Mountain Training Climbing Instructor awards, and their Coaching scheme.

He has written a number of climbing related books – '[Climbing Games](#)' and 'Top Tips for Climbing Coaches', as well as co-authoring Mountain Training's '[Remote Supervision Guidance Notes](#)', the British Mountaineering Council's '[Climbing Activity Cards](#)' and '[Coaching Adventure Sports](#)'.

You can follow his adventures at

<https://www.facebook.com/rockandwateradventures>

https://www.instagram.com/paulsmith_coach/



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