Appendix E – Rappel Equipment Irregularity Reporting Protocols

1. If a piece of equipment used in rappel or cargo letdown operations presents a potential safety issue or is suspected to have contributed to a rappel accident or incident with potential, the equipment shall be immediately sequestered and removed from service.

2. The spotter who identifies the issue will inform their regional representative to the National Rappel Working Team (NRWT) and/or Rappel Operations Subcommittee (ROS) representatives about the nature of the issue as soon as possible. The spotter shall document the equipment irregularity via the SAFECOM system.

3. The NRWT and ROS members will notify their respective Chairpersons.

4. The NRWT will make an initial assessment about the nature of the problem and determine whether it might pose an immediate or potential safety hazard. The NRWT is responsible for notifying all agency rappel users and respective Regional Helicopter Operations Specialist of known or suspected problems involving rappel or cargo letdown equipment.

5. The NRWT Chairperson shall notify other agencies also conducting rappel operations of the issue or incident.

6. Each Regional Helicopter Operations Specialist conducting rappel operations shall notify their respective Regional Aviation Safety Manager.

7. Any rappel equipment item that has been identified as anomalous, of questionable condition, or has contributed to an accident or incident will be sent to the MTDC Rappel Project Leader for examination and testing as soon as possible. In such cases, the Rappel Project Leader will perform and expedite the technical evaluation and report back to the NRWT Chairperson as soon practical.

8. Based upon the findings of the equipment testing, the NRWT, with collaboration from the ROS and MTDC Rappel Project Leader, shall communicate to the field units those findings along with recommendations or direction regarding the future use of said equipment.