



ANRARA

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SUBJECT SERVICE LIFE OF HIGH PRESSURE LIFTING AIR BAGS

There are a variety of makes air bags used by rescue services in Australia. These bags typically come in a variety of sizes and capacities but fall into two basic categories:

- High pressure, low volume bags
- Low pressure, high volume bags.

Each has different application. In the case of high pressure air bags, most manufacturers produce bags in a range of sizes from 1 tonne to 70 tonne. The bags are usually constructed with a steel reinforcing core and a robust rubber outer skin.

Notwithstanding the strong construction, Australian distributors have reported that some bags have deteriorated after being damaged following rescue operations, causing the potential for injury of failure of the equipment during a rescue.

ANRARA reminds all members of the following:

- All airbags when inflated technically constitute a pressure vessel and should be treated accordingly when in use.
- All airbags should be regularly inspected for obvious signs of damage and withdrawn from service if found to be faulty.
- All airbags should be regularly tested in accordance with manufacturers specifications (e.g. annual operational testing, five yearly hydrostatic pressure testing)
- All airbags have a fixed life span, usually ten years. Bags older than the manufacturer specified life span should be retired from service for occupational health and safety reasons.

If your rescue service does not have a policy on equipment replacement, ANRARA recommends based on manufacturer recommended life spans.

SOURCE **ANRARA Committee**
CONTACT **For more information about your air bags contact your equipment officer or supplier**

This information is provided by ANRARA as a service to members. ANRARA does not guarantee its accuracy and wherever possible will quote the source of the information for further enquiries.