



It seems very seldom that a year goes past without the recovery industry having to adopt, embrace or otherwise comply with yet another set of new rules, regulations or legislation. This time, it is the turn of winches and hoists – courtesy of a new standard, EN 14492.

The Wicked

WINCH

It came into force on 1st January 2010 and essentially brings the entire spectrum of manufacture, supply, fit and operate under the harmonised Health and Safety requirements of the EC Machinery Directive. Put simply, it makes the manufacturer, supplier, installer and operator jointly responsible for safety and compliance, be the latter a recovery firm, a small garage or a private individual.

However, the industry should not be surprised – consultations and drafts have been around anyway since 2006 – when the CEN (Comité Européen de Normalisation – or ‘Standardisation’ to us) approved the Standard. As the UK member of the Committee, the British Standards Institution

has played a key role in the process – and its publications and guidance documents are required reading for anyone now covered by the new regulations. Hardcopy and downloadable versions are available from BSI Customer Services (+44 (0)20 8996 9001 or via its website www.bsi-global.com

Whilst a clear understanding of the new standard and its requirements can be gained from the core EN 14492 document, it is worth noting that the BSI lists nearly forty other referenced EN and ISO standards and attendant documents as ‘indispensable’ for the application of EN 14492. There are also two categories within the new standard – EN14492-1 for power driven

winches – and EN14492-2 for power driven hoists. Inevitably therefore, some industry sources – whose engineers have the initial daunting task of ensuring that the equipment they manufacture and supply in future is fully compliant – have described some of the detail as confusing and even contradictory.

So how does the customer – chassis manufacturer, specialist bodybuilder or end user – know that what he is buying is fully compliant – especially now, as ‘getting it wrong’ could be very costly. All the mainstream winch and hoist manufacturers have already engaged and stepped up to their obligations under the new regime – and are fully committed to working more closely with

customers. This should ensure at least that the equipment being supplied precisely meets the technical specification and performance requirements for the job or application for which it will be used.

Some companies have also strengthened their technical sales and customer support teams, to be able to guide both the supply chain and the end user through what otherwise could be a bit of a minefield – punctuated with plenty of opportunities for, even unwittingly, stepping outside the new laws. For everyone therefore, buyer, builder or operator, that means, “If in doubt, ask”!

