

LUDO MCGURK TRANSPORT EQUIPMENT LTD.

SPECIALIST ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

AUTO-EJECT COVER BREAKAGES

We receive orders for spare covers from some users of our Auto-Eject systems. Some areas consume them in large quantities, other areas buy very few. Some vehicles can be seen with very old covers on them still in perfect condition. Clearly there are reasons for this disparity.

The old style cover with the square flap cover was replaced in October 2004 by a newer cover with a more rounded shape and a circular recessed flap cover. This was to comply the "Projections on Vehicles Directive" from the VCA. The old cover did comply but the new one was much more compliant and the recessed cover also gave superior weather-resisting qualities. Many people also commented on its more pleasing appearance.

The old-style cover could be broken off and this was often traced back to vandalism. In one ambulance area, large quantities of these were being broken off, whereas in other areas of the same ambulance authority very few were being broken.

The recessed flap of the new-style cover hinges upwards through 90°, as opposed to 180° of its predecessor. At the 90° point the breaking strain is 10lbs (4.53kgs) force, which is considerable.

REMEDIAL ACTION

Due to breakages, the hinge was subtly modified in 2006 to raise the breaking strain to a considerably higher level. The cover is cosmetically identical.

We have recovered quantities of broken covers from 3 ambulance areas and examination has shown that they are all of the unmodified type. On addition, sales of spare covers have fallen, although Auto-Eject sales continue to accelerate, with more than 10,500 now sold in UK & Ireland alone. This leads us to believe that the modification has been a success.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS

Vandalism will always be a cause of breakages and we cannot prevent this.

Positioning of the Auto-Eject on the vehicle body needs important consideration. If the unit is too low down, the operator cannot see what he or she is doing when trying to connect, so the cover tends to be pulled up more than it's travel arc will permit. Breakages on certain types of vehicles are higher than on others due to this.

Cables that are inappropriately routed to the vehicle can catch the cover as the vehicle drives away.

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FALLACIES

The Auto-Eject cover cannot be broken by the force of ejection. The connector is only ejected by the energy stored in it's springs when pushed in by the operator.

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E&OE

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