



The Viking PS5006 tether uses single-action snap hooks where the tether attaches to the suit.

Tether Warning

Survival-suit tethers keep a victim lashed to safety, whether it is a jackline, the webbing handhold of a life raft, or—as with several of the survival suits we tested—a fellow victim. However, as pointed out in our recent tether test (“Sailing on a Short Leash,” January 2007), with no means of release when it is under load, victims may find themselves tethered to something or someone that puts them further at risk.

The use of single-action clips and D-rings to connect built-in harness ends was another potential problem seen in some suits we tested. It’s been shown that this connection can be rotated, causing unintentional release. The best solution is to have stainless steel D-rings at both ends of a built-in webbing chest harness and use a piston-type, quick-release snap shackle, attached to a tether to secure the two harness rings together. The snap shackle should have a short pull-to-release pigtail that can be easily grasped by a person wearing heavy gloves. A quick-release shackle is a must for any tether terminal that attaches to a harness or other point on a survival suit.

Sailors have drowned while they were tethered to their vessels. The risk of being tethered to a panicking drowning victim is equally well-documented.