

**IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS  
PLEASE READ AND SAVE**



F4™

**Controlled Descent Device**

Manufactured by Sterling Rope Co., Inc.  
Made in USA. Patent pending.



**USER INFORMATION:**  
EMERGENCY SERVICES AUXILIARY  
EQUIPMENT IN ACCORDANCE  
WITH THE NFPA 1983-06 1NF3.

THIS DESCENT CONTROL DEVICE MEETS THE  
AUXILIARY EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS OF  
NFPA 1983, STANDARD ON LIFE SAFETY ROPE AND  
EQUIPMENT FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES, 2006  
EDITION.

**WARNING:**

- Professional training before use is required. Warranty card must be signed by trainer and returned to Sterling.
- The F4 is intended for use by experienced professionals only.
- This device requires the use of BOTH hands during descent. Brake hand must be on free end of rope.
- Inspection, use, and any repair of device must be done in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Failure to follow these instructions could result in serious injury or death.

THE F4 DESCENT CONTROL DEVICE IS  
RATED NFPA ESCAPE USE (E), MBS 13.5KN,  
FOR USE WITH NFPA 1983:2006 CERTIFIED  
ESCAPE CLASS ROPES WITH A DIAMETER  
RANGE OF 7.5MM – 9MM ONLY.

Please permanently retain this and all user information after it is removed from the device. A copy of this and all user information should be retained with the device at all times. User should refer to and be aware of all relevant safety information before use. Permanent records should be maintained detailing the amount of use, inspections, and maintenance of the device. User should follow department protocol when using the device in emergency situations. Additional information regarding auxiliary equipment can be found in NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, and NFPA 1983, Standard on Life Safety Rope and Equipment for Emergency Services.

**Before Use**

Knowledge of the techniques required to properly and safely use this device can only be acquired through professional personal instruction received from a trainer who is qualified in teaching all aspects of vertical rope work. Such instruction will include evaluation of your understanding and ability to perform all tasks required to safely and effectively use this device. Never attempt to use this device until you have received proper instruction and are deemed competent by your instructor. This device is designed to be an emergency bailout descender only for use with Sterling Rope's NFPA certified ropes having diameters ranging from 7.5mm – 9mm. It has an MBS of 13.5kN.

**Maintenance**

At all times keep the device away from acids, alkalis, and strong chemicals. Do not expose the device to flame or high temperatures. Store in a cool dry location. Do not store where the device may be exposed to moist air, particularly where dissimilar metals are stored together. If the device needs to be cleaned, hand wash with warm water and a mild detergent while working the handle. Do not use corrosive substances such as acetone or petroleum based solvents for cleaning. Rinse in clean warm water while working the handle and dry immediately.

**Repair**

Any modification or repair of the device other than that authorized in writing by Sterling Rope is prohibited due to the risk of impairing the function of the equipment. Any repair work or modification performed elsewhere shall release Sterling Rope Company, Inc. from all liability and responsibility as the manufacturer.

**Inspection Procedures**

This device must be visually and hand inspected by a qualified person, following the inspection procedures here before use. The inspector must inspect for dents, cracks, sharp edges, deformations, gouges, corrosion or excessive wear, or any other signs of damage that may have resulted from use or storage. Ensure smooth and full range of movement of the control lever. The inspector should also answer the following questions: Has the device been visually damaged? Has the device been exposed to heat or direct flame impingement? Has the device been exposed to liquids, solids, gasses, mists or vapors of any chemical or other material that can deteriorate the components of the device? If any of the questions listed here have been answered "yes" then refer to "retirement criteria" below. It is recommended that all use and inspection information be kept in an equipment log and stored with the device.

In the event that the device is impact loaded or dropped it is recommended that the device be removed from service. If you have questions or concerns, you may send the device to Sterling for evaluation.

**Retirement Criteria**

This device is to be removed from service immediately if: any of the questions listed above cannot be answered or are answered "yes", If the device does not pass visual inspection or if there is any doubt about the safety or serviceability of the device.

**Proper Use**

The F4 is designed to be used as an Escape Class Descent Control Device as specified by NFPA 1983. The device is for one-time use only with Sterling rope 7.5mm to 9mm escape class ropes certified to the NFPA 1983 standard such as FireTech 32™, RIT 500™, EscapeTech™, 8mm PER, and TSAFE™. Sterling Rope recommends that only new, unused F4 devices be issued to a firefighter as part of his escape gear. For training, it is recommended that separate F4 devices be used under supervision and continuous inspection; with the trainee at all times utilizing a separate safety belay.

Safe use of the F4 REQUIRES TRAINING AND PRACTICE. Sterling Rope strongly recommends all personnel receive training from a professional instructor.

The F4 is a solid aluminum bar with four holes and a release lever. Its function depends upon the friction gained by the rope going in and out of the holes and the pressure applied by the lever against the rope. To load rope in the device, the release lever must be in the up and closed position. Weave rope through all holes(1) making sure it goes through the bottom, concentric hole in the device and the lever. Make sure to knot the end of your rope, to be used as a stopper knot. Rope is threaded through the holes in the device as indicated by the diagram at the end of these instructions and as shown on the device. Attach the device to your harness with carabiner through the large corner hole in the lever.

Your F4 should be packed appropriately and ready for quick deployment prior to engaging fire.

A safe descent using the F4 requires a moderate amount of pre-planning. Please follow your department's protocol when employing the device in an emergency situation. While the F4's auto-lock feature is designed to allow both hands to be free while exiting a structure, SAFE USE OF THE DEVICE DURING A DESCENT REQUIRES USE OF BOTH HANDS AT ALL TIMES, ONE HAND RELEASING THE AUTO-STOP LEVER AND THE OTHER HAND BRAKING THE DESCENT BY HOLDING THE FREE END OF THE ROPE DOWN BY YOUR HIP.

(1) Depending upon firefighter size and weight (smaller), diameter of the rope used, and training, two of the top three holes may be employed to increase the ease of horizontal movement.

**Horizontal movement**

If there is a need to move horizontally out of an engaged space, where anchor attachment point is a distance away from exit point, attach anchor securely, and while moving horizontally, squeeze release lever and move. The device will slide along the rope.

**Descent**

Anchor rope securely. After allowing sufficient slack in the rope to clear any structure (such as a window sill) carefully load the device with your body weight. As soon as the device is loaded, the device will lock off. To descend further you must use two hands to operate the device: brake hand must grasp the un-tensioned, free end of the rope and hold down at your hip, while the other hand grips the device to control the release lever. Carefully squeeze the release lever while holding the free end of the rope with opposite hand. Control the rate of descent by varying the amount of grip pressure applied to the free end of the rope. To stop descending at any time, release pressure on the lever and/or tighten your grasp on the free end of the rope.

FULLY SQUEEZING THE LEVER WITHOUT HAND BRAKING OF THE FREE END OF THE ROPE WILL CAUSE RAPID DESCENT, SERIOUS INJURY OR DEATH. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE NON-LEVER HAND REMAINS ON THE FREE END OF THE ROPE AT ALL TIMES DURING DESCENT. To STOP, let go of the release lever.

TO ANCHOR



F4 properly rigged.

TO BRAKE HAND



Squeeze lever to begin descent, with brake hand on the free end of rope.



Once device is loaded, both hands are needed for operation: brake hand must be on free end of rope. Descent is controlled by squeezing release lever and varying pressure on free end of rope with brake hand.

To stop, let go of release lever.

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Sterling Rope F4 – Descent Control Device  
Class – Escape Use (E) Rated to 13.5KN  
Lot# \_\_\_\_\_

