

A Spanish patent conceived to save lives

Every day we build more and bigger buildings which enlarge our cities both in height and size; throughout the world skyscrapers are the natural habitat for offices and homes, and it seems that the higher up a flat is, the more desirable it is. But, what happens when a disaster situation affects one of these buildings? How do you evacuate people in the highest flats which the fire escape stairs do not reach? After catastrophes of the magnitude of the September 11th terrorist attacks, these questions have again become pressing issues and the answer is the Indess patented system, which is a simple and economic idea which hopes to save lives.



The name Indess is a Spanish abbreviation for Research and Development of Security and Rescue Systems. These are the reasons why José Mª González, the inventor of the system, worked and researched for more than 30 years. The need for a method to rescue people in buildings affected by disasters began to take root in this Andalusian entrepreneur's mind when he was yet an adolescent upon watching a news story on television about the death of dozens of people in a Brazilian hotel due to a fire. At that time José Mª González began to brewing up the idea for a new rescue system for buildings in times of disaster.

In 1984 he patented the first version of the rescue system and modified it in 2002. This version was the one González presented to Sicur exhibitors (International Security, Safety and Fire Exhibition). After listening to their favorable opinions and interesting suggestions, González made his latest and current patent under development in 2004.

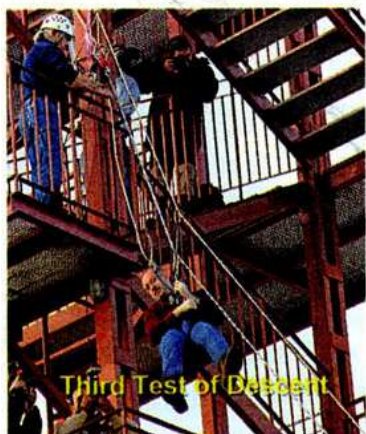
HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Indess system looks like a zip wire as it includes the same basic parts (a harness, snap ring or hook, and a rope) with the fundamental difference that the rope is actually



two steel cables rolled together to fulfill the function of an "infinite screw". Furthermore, it incorporates an engine that regulates and moderates the descent so that it is done as desired. In this way, with a controlled descent, the lowering angle can range from very flat angles to almost 90°.

The idea is to adapt the buildings so the Indess system can be used as a quick and massive evacuation method by incorporating anchors which are connected to the building. The cables would drop down from these hooks in the event of a disaster and the people trapped inside the building could use them to descend by putting on some harnesses.



ADVANTAGES WITH RESPECT TO OTHER SYSTEMS

- The system can be installed in buildings or mounted as necessary. In buildings of up to 30 floors high, the system can be used when connected to telescopic cranes and rescue people from outside the buildings.
- The Indess system works continuously, thus it is possible to evacuate a minimum of 6 people per minute and cable without interruption, independently of the state in which the individual is found (handicapped, unconscious, injured, etc.).
- Indess works under extreme conditions (wind, rain, snow, cold, heat) and at any angle, from 10° to 90° (perpendicular to the ground).
- It can be applied to any structure, including mobile (cable cars, chair lifts, etc.) and maritime (large boat rescues) structures.
- It is so easy to use that professionals or lay people can manage it.
- It is economic, can be manufactured with elements already existing on the market and its commercialization can make for substantial profit margins.

APPLICATIONS

Thanks to its characteristics, the system is perfect for adoption by rescue professionals as well as firefighters. In fact, it has been successfully tested by the Córdoba, Huelva, Málaga and Benalmádena firefighters, who share the opinion that it is an excellent system, increases efficiency, reduces rescue times and the number of people needed to carry out the rescue.

The ideal situation for the Indess system would be to install it in all buildings, so that when the alarms go off, the cables automatically drop down. This would not only permit objective safety, but also subjective safety, a feeling of tranquility and well-being for the people who live or work on the highest floors.

CURRENT MARKET SITUATION

Unfortunately, the Indess system has still not been launched onto the market due to delays in obtaining authorizations, as no other similar system exists and therefore, the bureaucratic process is turning out to be complicated. At this time, Indess maintains contact with Equalitas, AEC, a company which is set to authorize it upon receiving support from the firefighters, which in fact already exists.

José Mª González hopes the invention can be commercialized as soon as possible, given that several international companies are interested in its use, including some Chinese executives who believe this system is an extremely effective method to cover the security and evacuations needs of large cities.

INDESS

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