

'Bargain basement' ambulances put staff and patients at risk



South East Coast Ambulance Service (Secamb) is putting staff and patients' safety at risk with bargain basement vehicles, GMB Union has warned.

Fiat vehicles – which Seccomb operates alongside its traditional fleet – have a significant safety flaw; the seat position has been moved so staff and patients cannot position the seat belt correctly across their collar bone and shoulder.

GMB Union has written to its thousands of Secamb members warning them not to use the trust's bargain basement purchases without seeking a personal risk assessment.



The union's health and safety assessment suggest the incorrectly positions seatbelts could lead to severe injury including decapitation.

GMB is now calling for these vehicles to be banned for staff and patients until an independent review is conducted proving they are safe to use.

Lib Whitfield, GMB Organiser, said:

"Trusts across the country are trying to cut costs by using these bargain basement vehicles instead of the safer specification Mercedes ambulances - but they are risking lives.

"These adapted vehicles aren't safe for running errands - never mind speeding to save someone's life.

"It is simply only a matter of time before someone dies - GMB will not be kept silent by an uncaring employer

"Despite GMB Union raising this issue constantly, Secamb executives have ordered another more than 60 more of these potential death traps.

"Trusts bosses have laughed openly at GMB reps who've tried to raise this serious safety issue.

"GMB believes the trust does not simply want to be the first in the country to admit there is a serious safety issue in these vehicles.

"GMB cannot stand by and wait for someone to lose their life or suffer catastrophic injuries - if Secamb is so certain these vehicles are safe why not allow an independent safety assessment?"

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