

**Rack Repairs by Straightening Damaged Uprights**

The repair of damaged uprights by straightening them using a jig and a hydraulic ram and other similar methods has been drawn to SEMA's attention. These methods and the safety of them is a cause of concern for SEMA rack manufacturers whose products are modified in this manner. The following points should be noted:

1. Racking structures manufactured by SEMA members in the UK come with the manufacturer's warranty that is based on independent verification of the quality of the product via the SEMA QAS 2000 quality system. Part of this process is the independent testing of the manufacturer's products in line with BS EN 15512 and SEMA Code requirements ensuring the products supplied are fit for purpose. After being straightened the properties of the racking are altered from the known state on which the original approval testing was carried out.
2. The manufacturer's warranty and guaranteed carrying capacity (as displayed on the load notice) may become null and void once any third party has carried out a repair in this manner, and any party seeking to have such work carried out should satisfy themselves of the effect of any such repair as well as any potential effect on any insurance cover. Clarification should also be sought from any third party carrying out such work as to whether they will accept liability not only for the workmanship of what has been modified, but also for resultant structural integrity of the racking structure. BS EN 15635 clearly states that the safest way to repair damaged rack components is by replacement with like for like components. BS EN 15635 also notes that "damaged components should be replaced rather than repaired as effective quality control is difficult on cold formed materials". This will ensure the integrity of the racking remains intact and normally can be warranted again by the original manufacturer.
3. In emphasising this further the HSE guideline on Warehousing and Storage, HSG 76, states categorically in clause 633 that "all racking systems should be of good mechanical construction, of sound material, adequate strength and installed and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions."
4. With regard to any repair methods that claim there is no need to offload pallets in order to carry out the repair, SEMA's opinion is that this is a high risk procedure and advises that such claims run counter to HSG 76 recommendations. Clause 652 states "where damage is identified that affects the safety of the racking system, the racking should be offloaded and controls introduced to prevent it being used until remedial work has been carried out".