

The following Minimum Standard is applicable on all projects

Introduction

Rope access is defined as any method of suspended access system incorporating a harness and two ropes as the primary means of accessing the work. The trade association for rope access specialists is the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA) who is recognised as a leading authority on rope access methods.

Rope access methods provide individual protection and therefore **must only be used** when a working platform or collective protection measures cannot be implemented

Planning

Rope access must always be connected to the structure by use of anchor points. There are two types of anchor points:

- Certified Anchor point: A proprietary anchor point installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions that has been "pull tested" and certificated
- Structural Anchor Point: Part of the fabric of the structure, i.e. a column or beam. The suitability of a structural anchor may need to be approved by a structural engineer
- All proprietary anchor points must be inspected prior to each shift
- Rope access technicians **must always** be attached to at least two independent anchor points at all times

Note: Where work involves the inspection of a rock face (or embankment?) a temporary anchor point may be used and will be installed in accordance with the IRATA guidelines.

A risk assessment must always be carried out justifying that rope access is the most appropriate method of working at height. The risk assessment and associated method statement must detail site specific hazards, risks and control measures.

Exclusion zones must be established to prevent access beneath the work area and may also be required around the anchor points.

Project specific emergency arrangements including a mandatory rescue plan must be detailed in the risk assessment and the method statement provided by the IRATA registered rope access specialist.

Competence/Training

There are three levels of training for IRATA rope access technicians as follows:

- **Level 1: (Technician)** able to perform a limited range of rope activities under the supervision of a level 3 Supervisor
- **Level 2: (Technician)** able to rig working lines and undertake rescues under the supervision of a level 3 Supervisor
- **Level 3: (Supervisor)** able to supervise rope access activities. The nominated IRATA supervisor will have full responsibility for the rope work being undertaken on site

All rope access work must be under the direct supervision of a certificated IRATA level 3 supervisor.

Documentation

All equipment, harnesses, ropes, lanyards etc. must be inspected prior to use and have 6 monthly thorough examination certificates and records of inspection.

Further Guidance/Reference

IRATA TEL 01233 754 600 or www.irata.org

ROPE ACCESS CHECKLIST

Contract Name & No:

Date:

Name of Person Undertaking check or safety Monitoring:

Check		Complete	
1.	Is the use of rope access systems the most appropriate for the task?	✓	x
2.	Has a detailed risk assessment and method statement been provided by the IRATA rope access specialist?	✓	x
3.	Have the IRATA qualifications of the level 3 supervisor and level 1 and 2 rope technicians been checked?	✓	x
4.	Have all proprietary anchor points (primary and secondary) been tested with copies of a current test certificate made available?	✓	x
5.	If part of an existing structure is to be used as an anchor point (i.e. a beam or column) does the anchor point need to be approved by a structural engineer?	✓	x
6.	Has access to the anchor points been secured to prevent interference/vandalism?	✓	x
7.	Is there a daily regime of inspection of the anchor points?	✓	x
8.	Have exclusion zones been established below the work area and if necessary around the anchor points?	✓	x
9.	Is there a need for tools and fittings to be tethered to the operatives' tool belt?	✓	x
10.	Is there an effective method of communication between the rope access technicians (i.e. two way radio, mobile phone or etc.)?	✓	x
11.	Is the area that the technicians connect onto the ropes protected in order to prevent falls whilst they "clip on"?	✓	x
12.	Will the weather conditions affect the work?	✓	x
13.	Are arrangements in place for rescuing a falling person or recovering materials?	✓	x
14.	Other issues? (Specify)	✓	x

Signature

Date