

Rope Access: Risk assessments and method statements Transcript

0:07

Hi, I'm Toby and I work in the City of London's health and safety team

0:11

where we help keep people safe here in the Square Mile. Industrial rope access

0:16

sometimes called abseiling is a growing industry and is commonly used to window

0:20

cleaning and maintenance here in the city.

0:22

The aim of this brief video is to assist building and facilities managers

0:26

in asking the right kind of questions when looking at rope access risk assessments

0:31

method statements. There is a second video focusing on assessing competence.

0:35

Check our website for details.

0:41

Rope access is specialist work

0:45

and most people aren't likely to be experts in it, but you will still have some

0:49

responsibility for ensuring that the work can be carried out safely

0:53

if you are inviting contractors in to do that work on your behalf.

0:56

So after checking competence you then need to look over the paperwork you are

1:01

given to make sure it is suitable for the site. A useful reference document to use

1:06

is British Standard 7985. This detail Safety Standards for the industry

1:12

and we will be discussing many of the Code of Practice requirements in this

1:16

video.

1:16

The IRATA code of practice has a useful example of a risk assessment template

1:21

you should look at too. In essence the risk assessment needs to identify

1:26

all the foreseeable hazards on the site and how they intend to overcome them.

1:34

So let's look at the details, firstly consider what anchor

1:37

points will be used. Are all the anchor points clearly identified?

1:44

Where technicians secure their ropes is quite a key decision

1:47

and it isn't as straightforward as you might think. This is more than

1:51

educated guesswork and will need evidence to back it up.

1:54

Purpose installed eyebolts are commonly used. Are all anchor points

1:58

unquestionably reliable.

2:02

Fixed ladders, guard rails and full restraint man safe systems are generally not

2:06

suitable for use as rope access anchor points. It may be tempting to use cradle

2:11

tracks as anchors

2:12

but these are not necessarily designed for lateral loading.

2:15

Ensure that these have been assessed for use as an anchor point by a qualified engineer.

2:20

Dead weight trolleys or A-frames can be used

2:24

but you need to think about how they're going to be maneuvered into position.

2:27

Are the anchor points low tested and in date?

2:32

Anchor points should be low tested, thoroughly examined

2:35

and ideally labelled with this information. All rope access anchor

2:39

points fall under Lola

2:41

and require examination by a competent person

2:44

in the six-month period before they are used. This is a strict legal requirement

2:49

and you might think it's the equivalent of an MOT. It is not the same as routine

2:54

inspections and testing

2:55

and it is a common mistake that we see made on site.

2:59

A good method statement will identify the specific

3:02

anchor points for each drop so it should be straightforward for you to identify where

3:07

these are from the paperwork.

3:08

This is one of the most critical physical control measures involved

3:12

and should be documented.

3:15

There should also be at least two separate anchor points available for the
3:19
main working line and the safety line.
3:20
This is the principal of double protection
3:23
where two independent ropes and anchor points are used
3:27
so that there is a backup to prevent a fall if one fails.
3:33
Another consideration
3:37
is whether operatives can actually get to anchor points without putting
3:40
themselves in danger of falling.
3:42
Do you need other systems such as for restraint
3:45
of all arrest in place to allow a technician to get to their final place at work.
3:50
This should also be in the method statement and if we consider window cleaning
3:55
this often means accessing several different facades via different routes.
3:59
The documented plan needs to take all those into account
4:02
individually. Are there any structures forming part of the building which could
4:06
cause a problem
4:07
such as open windows pillars or fragile services.
4:11
Have they considered what will happen below where the work is taking place.
4:15
Do you need an exclusion zone and are appropriate warnings given at ground level.
4:19
Suitable rope protection is crucial.
4:26
Are there any surfaces at your site that
4:29
may cause damage to the ropes. Ropes should be rigged to avoid running over
sharp edges
4:34
such as steel work or masonry and even hot surfaces.
4:37
If your contractors can't avoid this then the rope needs to be protected.
4:41
This can be a edge roller, tough matting or double led canvas.
4:50
Is the equipment in use subject to regular maintenance and inspection

4:54

including daily pre use checks and regular detailed inspections

4:58

on at least a six monthly basis. This goes beyond checking the anchor points.

5:03

They may also need interim inspections for times when working conditions may

5:08

lead to high levels of wear and tear.

5:10

Does your contractor have records to demonstrate routine maintenance and inspection.

5:19

Have they considered how the rope access technicians in the team

5:23

will communicate with each other and when necessary

5:26

third parties such as site reception or security.

5:29

And this video has not covered all eventualities

5:33

rather it's the minimum that should be considered before planning work at height

5:37

and I hope it's given you the opportunity to pick up on some key

5:40

points that must be considered

5:42

before work starts at your site. We're happy to give further advice to anyone

5:46

looking to do rope access or

5:47

work at height work in the Square Mile.

English

AllRope accessListenableFrom City of London CorporationRecently uploaded