



Risk assessment and method statement

Rope access risk assessment

Rope access for building maintenance and inspection. Pre-filled with typical hazards, controls and sequence: edit it for this site.

PROJECT

SITE ADDRESS			
ACTIVITY		RAMS REFERENCE	
Rope access for building maintenance and inspection			
CONTRACTOR CARRYING OUT THE WORK		PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR	
PREPARED BY	APPROVED BY	REVISION	DATE

Revision record

Reissue and rebrief when the sequence, the programme, the team or the conditions change. If you would have written it differently had you known, it needs a new revision.

REV	DATE	WHAT CHANGED	BY

THE WORK

The activity, the place and the people

Pre-filled for this kind of work. Make every line specific to this site: this sequence, this access, these people, this weather.

Scope of the activity

What is being done, and what is not included.

MHSWR REGULATION 3(1)

Rope access to [describe the task: inspection, cleaning, sealant repair, fixings] on the [elevations] of [building], from [number] drops of up to [x] metres. Anchors: [installed eyebolts or structural anchors, ref]. Rope access chosen because [reason a platform, MEWP or cradle is not reasonably practicable]. Not included: [list any exclusions].

Location and access

Where on site, how people and materials get there, and the restrictions.

Roof access via [route and hatch], under the building's roof access permit. Kit carried in bags by the [lift or stairs]. Exclusion zone below each drop, barriered and signed, with [entrance or route] closed or covered as agreed. Working hours [08:00 to 17:00].

Programme and interfaces

When the work runs, and who else is working nearby.

CDM REGULATION 15(2)

START DATE	DURATION	WORKING HOURS
INTERFACES WITH OTHER TRADES		
Building manager and occupants: cradles, BMUs and roof plant isolated and windows on each drop kept shut. Other trades and the public kept out of the zone below. Any change to the drops or anchors goes through the Level 3 supervisor.		

Documents this RAMS relies on

Anchor test or examination records [ref]. Thorough examination records for ropes and devices. Drop plan or elevation drawing marked with anchors and drops. Rescue plan for each drop. IRATA certificates and logbooks. Roof access permit [ref].

The team, and their competence

CDM REGULATION 8

ROLE	NAME	CARD, TICKET OR TRAINING NEEDED	CONTACT
Level 3 supervisor		IRATA Level 3, responsible for rope access safety on the job, with advanced rigging and rescue skills and a current first aid certificate.	
Level 2 technicians		IRATA Level 2 for more complex rigging and rescue, working under the Level 3.	
Level 1 technicians		IRATA Level 1 for a set range of rope access tasks, working under the Level 3.	
Rescue		Enough people on site trained and practised in the rescue plan for each drop.	
Ground person		Briefed on the exclusion zone, the radio and how to call the emergency services.	
Anchor installer		Competent to install and test anchors to BS 7883, for any new anchors.	

PROJECT	DOCUMENT Rope access risk assessment	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 2 of 8
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METHOD STATEMENT

The sequence of work

The order the team will work in on the day, with the controls built into each stage. If the sequence changes on site, revise the RAMS and brief it again.

STAGE	WHAT IS DONE, AND HOW	CONTROLS AT THIS STAGE	BY
Before the day	Survey the building: anchors and their records, edges, drops, landing areas, roof access, plant and the areas below. Confirm why rope access is chosen over other equipment, and write the rescue plan for each drop.	Anchor records seen; rescue plan for each drop; RAMS approved by the client or principal contractor.	Level 3 supervisor
Arrival and briefing	Sign in, collect any roof access permit, then brief the team on this RAMS, the rescue plan, the exclusion zone and the wind limit. Check IRATA certificates and logbooks.	Briefing signed against this revision; certificates in date; permit issued.	Level 3 supervisor
Set up the zone below	Barrier and sign the exclusion zone below each drop, close or cover entrances as agreed, and post the ground person with a radio.	Zone sized for the drop and the wind; public and occupants kept out.	Ground person
Equipment checks	Each technician checks their harness, devices, connectors and ropes before use. The Level 3 confirms the thorough examination records are in date.	Defective kit tagged and quarantined; checks recorded.	Each technician
Rig the anchors and ropes	Rig the working line and the safety line to separate anchors, working behind a parapet or in restraint. Fit rope protectors at every edge and tie stopper knots in the rope ends.	The Level 3 checks every rig before anyone goes over the edge.	Level 2 or 3
Rescue ready	Set the rescue kit at the top of the drop and name the rescuer for each drop. Confirm radio contact between the top, the rope and the ground.	Rescue can start at once; nobody goes on the ropes alone.	Level 3 supervisor
Descend and work	Buddy check, then go over the edge on both lines. Carry out the task with tools tethered, using a work seat on longer drops. Keep the zone below in place throughout.	Attached to both lines at all times; materials lowered in bags; nothing dropped.	Technicians
Weather and changes	Check the wind at the top through the day. Stop work above the limit, in lightning or in heavy rain, and re-rig before moving to a new drop.	Each new rig checked by the Level 3; RAMS revised if the method changes.	Level 3 supervisor
Derig and clear	Bring the technicians off the ropes, derig, check and bag the kit, remove the barriers, close the permit and hand the area back to the building manager.	Damaged kit quarantined; zone kept until the last rope is down.	Level 3 supervisor

CDM REGULATION 15(2): PLAN, MANAGE AND MONITOR THE WORK

PROJECT	DOCUMENT Rope access risk assessment	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 3 of 8
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RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazards, controls and the risk that remains

Each significant hazard rated before and after its controls, as likelihood times severity. The ratings are typical: check them for this site.

	LIKELIHOOD		SEVERITY		
	1	2	3	4	5
5	5	10	15	20	25
4	4	8	12	16	20
3	3	6	9	12	15
2	2	4	6	8	10
1	1	2	3	4	5

1 to 4 low
 5 to 12 medium
 15 to 25 high

HAZARD	WHO COULD BE HARMED, AND HOW	RISK BEFORE	CONTROLS	RISK AFTER	BY
Falls while on the ropes	Technicians descending, ascending or working on a drop.	3 x 5 = 15 High	- Two separately anchored lines, a working line and a safety line, with the technician attached to both at all times. - A back-up device on the safety line that travels with the technician, and a descender that locks if control is lost. - Buddy check of harness, devices and connectors before every descent, confirmed by the Level 3.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	Level 3 supervisor
Anchor failure	Technicians on the system if an eyebolt, anchor or structural member gives way.	2 x 5 = 10 Med	- Installed anchors used only with a current test or examination record, kept with the RAMS. - Structural anchors chosen by the Level 3 for the foreseeable load; never vents, pipework or rails of unknown strength. - Working line and safety line each on their own anchor, so no single anchor failure drops the technician.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	Level 3 supervisor
Ropes cut or damaged on edges	Technicians, if a rope is cut, worn or melted where it runs over a parapet, sill or coping.	3 x 5 = 15 High	- Rope protectors or edge rollers at every edge and contact point, checked on each descent. - Ropes rigged clear of sharp metal, glass, hot exhausts and moving parts, with deviations where needed. - No cutting, grinding or chemicals near the ropes unless the ropes are shielded or rerouted.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	
Falls while rigging at the roof edge	Technicians setting up anchors and ropes on a roof with open edges or fragile surfaces.	3 x 5 = 15 High	- Rigging done behind a parapet or guard-rail where there is one. - Elsewhere, a work restraint lanyard to a separate anchor, short enough that nobody can reach the edge. - Fragile rooflights and roof sheets identified in the survey and kept out of the rigging area.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	
Technician stranded or injured on the rope	A technician taken ill, injured or stuck on the ropes and unable to get down.	2 x 5 = 10 Med	- Written rescue plan for each drop, with the rescue kit at the top and ready to use. - Nobody on the ropes alone; enough people on site trained in the rescue, led by the Level 3. - Rescue started at once by the team, without waiting for the emergency services, who are called at the same time.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	Level 3 supervisor
Loss of control on descent	Technicians descending too fast, with a misthreaded device or off the end of a rope.	2 x 5 = 10 Med	- Descender with a self-locking function, threaded and checked by the user and a second technician. - Ropes long enough to reach the ground or landing, with stopper knots tied in the ends. - Technicians trained and assessed for the devices in use, and familiar with the model.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	
Dropped tools and materials	The public, occupants and other trades below the drop.	4 x 4 = 16 High	- Every tool tethered to the technician or the work seat, with bags closed between uses. - Heavier materials raised and lowered in bags on a separate line, never thrown or dropped. - Exclusion zone below kept in place until the last technician is down.	2 x 4 = 8 Med	
People walking under the work	The public, building occupants and other trades entering the zone below.	3 x 4 = 12 Med	- Barriered and signed exclusion zone, sized for the drop and for drift in the wind. - Entrances and routes below closed or covered, as agreed with the building manager in advance. - A ground person stationed where the zone crosses a route, in radio contact with the team.	1 x 4 = 4 Low	Ground person

MHSWR REGULATION 3(6): WITH FIVE OR MORE EMPLOYEES, RECORD THE SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS

PROJECT	DOCUMENT Rope access risk assessment	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 4 of 8
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RISK ASSESSMENT, CONTINUED

More hazards, and those specific to this site

HAZARD	WHO COULD BE HARMED, AND HOW	RISK BEFORE	CONTROLS	RISK AFTER	BY
Wind, rain, cold and lightning	Technicians on exposed elevations, blown off line or chilled on long drops.	3 x 4 = 12 Med	• Forecast checked each morning and the wind limit for the job written on the briefing. • Wind measured at the top during the day; work stopped above the limit, in lightning or in icing. • Warm, waterproof clothing in winter, water and shade in summer, and planned breaks.	2 x 4 = 8 Med	
Equipment failure or misuse	Technicians relying on ropes, devices, harnesses, connectors and slings.	2 x 5 = 10 Med	• Pre-use check by the user each day, with defective kit tagged and taken out of use. • Thorough examination at least every 6 months, or to an examination scheme, and each item traceable to its record. • Kit used to the manufacturer's instructions, with components checked as compatible.	1 x 5 = 5 Med	
Loose facade material	People below, if stone, render, glass or cladding found loose during inspection falls.	3 x 4 = 12 Med	• Inspection drops planned with the exclusion zone in place before anyone touches the facade. • Loose material reported to the client at once, then made safe or removed under control. • Nothing levered off and dropped; pieces bagged and lowered.	1 x 4 = 4 Low	
Building plant, windows and cradles	Technicians struck by an opening window, a moving cradle or BMU, or hot fan exhausts.	3 x 4 = 12 Med	• Work agreed with the building manager: cradles and BMUs isolated and roof plant made safe. • Occupants told in advance, with windows on the drop locked or kept shut. • Permit to work for roof access where the building operates one.	1 x 4 = 4 Low	
Power tools used from the rope	Technicians drilling, grinding or fixing from a work seat or harness.	3 x 4 = 12 Med	• Tools on lanyards, battery powered where possible, and chosen for one-handed control. • A secure work position, with extra rigging or a seat for any task with high torque. • Dust and fume controlled at source, with eye protection worn.	2 x 4 = 8 Med	
Harness pressure and fatigue	Technicians on long drops and full days in the harness.	3 x 3 = 9 Med	• A work seat provided where the length of the task makes it necessary, as Schedule 5 requires. • Planned breaks off the rope, tasks rotated and water at the top.	2 x 3 = 6 Med	
Cleaning and repair substances	Technicians using cleaning chemicals, sealants and resins, and the textile kit they touch.	3 x 3 = 9 Med	• COSHH assessment for each product, with the safety data sheet checked before use. • Products carried in small closed containers, kept away from ropes, harnesses and slings. • Kit that touches a chemical quarantined until a competent person has checked it.	2 x 3 = 6 Med	
Carrying kit to the roof	Technicians carrying rope bags and equipment up stairs, ladders and roof hatches.	3 x 2 = 6 Med	• Kit split into bags of a manageable weight and taken up in the lift where there is one. • Bags hauled through roof hatches on a line, rather than carried up a fixed ladder.	2 x 2 = 4 Low	

PROJECT	DOCUMENT Rope access risk assessment	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 5 of 8
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EQUIPMENT

Plant, equipment and PPE

Plant and equipment		Each item, the checks and certificates it needs, and who may operate it.
PUWER 1998, LOLER 1998		
ITEM	CHECKS AND CERTIFICATES	OPERATOR COMPETENCE
Working and safety ropes	Pre-use check each day; thorough examination at least every 6 months.	Each technician
Descenders, ascenders and back-up devices	Pre-use check and function test; examination record in date.	Trained in the device
Harnesses, connectors and slings	Pre-use check each day; damaged items quarantined.	Each technician
Installed anchors and eyebolts	Current test or examination record seen before rigging.	Level 3 supervisor
Rope protectors and work seats	Checked on each rig; fitted at every edge.	Level 2 or 3
Rescue kit	At the top of each drop and checked before work starts.	Trained rescuer

Personal protective equipment		PPE is the last line of defence, after the controls above. Specify the type, not just the item.
PPE AT WORK REGULATIONS 1992		
ITEM	NEEDED	TYPE AND SPECIFICATION
Safety helmet	☒	Helmet with chin strap, at all times
Safety footwear	☒	Safety boots with a grip sole
High-visibility clothing	☐	
Gloves	☒	Rope handling gloves with good grip
Eye protection	☒	For drilling, cleaning and chemicals
Hearing protection	☐	
Respiratory protection Type, and face-fit tested	☐	
Harness or restraint Anchor points identified	☒	Rope access harness, restraint when rigging

CONTROLS

Substances, permits, emergencies and the environment

Hazardous substances

Each substance and its COSHH assessment.

COSHH 2002, REGULATION 6

SUBSTANCE	COSHH ASSESSMENT REFERENCE	CONTROLS

Permits and plans

PERMIT OR PLAN	NEEDED	REFERENCE
Hot work permit	☐	
Permit to work	☒	
Permit to dig or break ground	☐	
Confined space entry	☐	
Lift plan	☒	
Temporary works design	☐	

Emergency and rescue

First aid, fire, and how someone is rescued.
The rescue plan belongs in the RAMS, not
after it.

A written rescue plan for each drop, with the rescue kit at the top and a named rescuer. Rescue starts at once, without waiting for the emergency services. First aider on site, the nearest accident and emergency department named on the briefing, and the building's emergency procedure followed.

Environment and neighbours

Dust, noise, vibration, waste, spills and hours
of work.

Cleaning water and chemicals kept out of drains unless the building allows it. Sealant tubes, packaging and debris bagged and brought down. Work stopped when the wind passes the limit for the job. Zone below kept tidy and clear of trip hazards.

PROJECT	DOCUMENT Rope access risk assessment	REVISION	DATE	PAGE 7 of 8
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Briefed before the work starts

DATE AND TIME

A SIGNATURE AGAINST A REVISION, ON A DATE, BEFORE THE WORK STARTED, IS HOW A BRIEFING IS EVIDENCED

A pre-filled starting point, not legal advice. Edit it for the site and have it approved.