



Standard Operating Procedure for Facade Cleaning Work

Introduction

This information sheet gives facade cleaners guidance on the use of rope access methods and controlling risks. The contents should also be noted by clients, specifiers, managers and contractors.

It has been produced because rope access is increasingly used in Facade cleaning and it has become clear that not all Facade cleaning businesses fully understand the complexities of using this access method

Because of the limited range of tasks in Facade cleaning compared with rope access methods across all industries, less breadth of knowledge is required and only simpler rope access skills are generally needed. Nevertheless, full competence in those areas necessary remains crucial, as for all rope access work.

This guidance is not intended to apply to the use of bosun's chairs, although some of the information may be relevant (the use of an additional back-up line, for example).

This document provides summary guidance only. Anyone involved with rope access operations should familiarise themselves with the British Standard Code of Practice BS 7985: 2002: *The use of rope access methods for industrial purposes* (see 'Further reading').

Choice of access method

For any Facade-cleaning task, in the first instance an assessment should be made to establish whether rope access is an appropriate method for the work. For all work at height, the most intrinsically safe means of access should always be the first consideration. Other safer methods of access, such as cleaning from inside, suspended access equipment or mobile platforms, will often be preferable. In general, the most effective control for any hazard is to eliminate it and only if this is not possible should you then look to control risks to an acceptable level.

General requirements for a safe system of work

Rope access must be only be used within a defined system of work. Elements of a safe system will include:

- proper management and planning including risk assessment and supervision;
- use of trained, competent persons;
- selection, maintenance and care of appropriate equipment;
- Proper control of working methods, including:-use of work equipment,-emergency procedures,-protection for third parties



Management and planning

Risk assessment

Factors to be considered include the likely duration of the work, the ease of access, the possibility of using an alternative, safer work method (e.g. work platform, work from inside the building) and the presence of any hazards.

Management

A nominated person should be identified, who is responsible for managing all aspects of rope access work. The nominated person must have experience and/or training in the type of work the company plans to undertake. Similarly, designated supervisors will be required to directly oversee and direct work in progress on all jobs.

Planning rope access operations

A system of work should be drawn up, taking account of risks from rope access operations generally and job-specific risks that are present and can be foreseen. The safe system should specify rescue arrangements, selection of correct equipment, selection of people with the necessary level of competence and arrangements for control and communication.

Personnel

Competence

A competent person may be defined as someone who is suitably trained or qualified by knowledge and practical experience to enable them to:

- carry out their required duties at the level of responsibility required of them;
- fully understand any potential hazards related to the work under consideration;
- detect any technical defects or omissions in that work, recognise any implications for health and safety, and be able to specify appropriate remedial action as necessary.

In other words, a competent person should be able not only to discover defects but tell what effect they are likely to have.

Safety in rope access work critically depends on high levels of competence in all staff.

Levels of responsibility for those involved in rope access work

For rope access operations, levels of responsibility are usually defined as:

- **Rope access manager:** can define and operate a safe system applicable to all worksites;
- **Supervisor:** can implement a safe working system for a particular worksite;
- **Operative:** can carry out specific work tasks under supervision.



Managers

It is desirable for managers to have practical experience of various work methods. Necessary management skills will include knowing how to:

- create and operate a general system for management of rope access operations, to include as an absolute minimum the requirements set out in this information sheet;
- understand and recognise risks arising from different work situations;
- create and properly use generic and task-specific method statements;
- implement procedures for proper purchase, inspection and care of rope access equipment;
- compile method statements and ensure proper application on-site;
- decide on specific working methods for rope access techniques and work tasks;
- ensure supervision, work equipment and personnel are appropriate for the work to be done;
- monitor and review effectiveness of working methods.

Operatives

Operatives should be at least 18 years of age, normally with a maximum weight of 100 kg. They should have an aptitude for work at height and must be physically capable of carrying out the tasks required. They should be free from any impairment that may prevent them from working safely at height. No one suffering the following conditions should do rope access work: Employees should undergo regular medical examination to ensure they are reasonably physically fit.

Training and competence

All operatives should have received training in rope access work and should have appropriate knowledge, experience and practical skills for the type of work being undertaken.

Training should be carried out by a competent organisation, and should include assessment of specific skills and knowledge. The

training programme should be formalised in both time and performance, and should be assessed by a competent person who did

not deliver the training. Training schemes should clearly state the scope of the training provided, the intended duration of certification

and any limitations to be observed, either of individual personnel or of working methods.

Companies should be aware that training is no substitute for experience. Newly trained individuals should be closely supervised

and introduced to rope access work gradually, under carefully controlled circumstances. Practice of 'mock-up' work situations is recommended.

If access techniques have not been used for more than six months, refresher training must be carried out and the operative should

receive a higher level of supervision until they have become accustomed again to this type of work.



Operatives should maintain a working record showing training received and details of subsequent work experience. This record will assist employers in assessing and verifying an employee's suitability for particular types of work.

Before starting any job, all operatives must be competent to:

- properly inspect access equipment before every use;
- understand all risks arising from the access method and work task;
- use all access techniques required by a particular worksite. For Facade cleaning work, the minimum level of practical skills needed will include:
 - controlled descent;
 - use of back-up system;
 - short ascent;
 - change from one rope to another;
 - knots, elementary safe rigging, rope management;
 - selection of safe anchor points;
 - equipment care and pre-use checks
 - safety of third parties;
 - elementary rescue.
- Operatives will always be attached to at least two independently anchored safety systems Connection to the rope access system should be
 - in an area where there is no risk of a fall from a height, unless there is protection by other means Exclusion zones should be established as appropriate. This may require zones at locations other than top and bottom of the rope access work.
- Especially for rescue, because a single descent to the ground is not possible

First aid

Every worksite should have access to reasonable first-aid provision and at least one member of a work team should have received first-aid training.

Use of work equipment

Steps should be taken to ensure that any work equipment (eg cleaning tools, buckets, squeegees etc) is properly secured and used safely. All items must be

- attached so they cannot fall, and large items (over
- 8 kg) should be suspended on an additional haul rope
 - Tool bags or pouches may be appropriate for some work

• Rescue

The provision of adequate emergency measures is of prime importance when carrying out rope access work. There should be a specific rescue plan for each