

IRATA Guidelines

Work is now proceeding well in the revision of the above document into a completely re-configured 'Code of Practice.' The document is currently undergoing its first review at Executive level but will soon be circulated to the entire membership for further review. It is **essential** that all member companies take time to review the new document, be sure they understand it and the implications it has for them, and question any content that they unclear or unsure of. It is our intention to have this work completed and the CoP published ahead of the AGM in September so your help in the review process is most important.

General Meeting

This will be held on Tuesday 13th May at 2.00pm at the Arden Hotel, Birmingham (same venue as last year). The hotel is close to Birmingham Airport, Birmingham International Rail Station and, importantly, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC).

The Guest Speaker this year will be Rog Thomson from the Offshore Division of the HSE in Aberdeen and we hope a good number of members will attend both to hear Rog speak and then to hear the reports from officers of the Association and contribute to the decision-making of the meeting.

Safety and Health Expo – 13-15 May

This is the main trade show for our sector in the UK this year and IRATA will be involved in three different ways:-

1. Several member companies will have stands at the show
2. IRATA will be part of the Access Industry Forum stand
3. IRATA will be presenting each day at the AIF Work-at-Height Theatre with Karl Raby, Jonathan Capper and Rod Dymott booked to speak

Entrance to the show is FREE for those who pre-register but a significant fee is charged to those who are not. You can register at www.safety-health-expo.com

The NEC is 15 mins walk or a short cab ride from The Arden Hotel

Accident Statistics and Report

The Executive Committee has agreed to appoint Dr Chris Robbins to take on this work from Malcolm James. Chris is well-known to many of you having most recently worked with the Offshore Division of the HSE in Aberdeen.

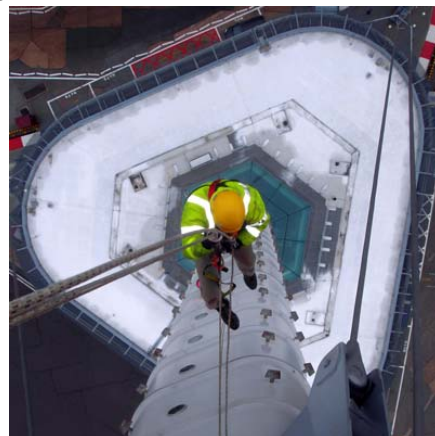
The change of personnel has enabled us to revisit the whole subject of our accident recording policy and various changes are being looked at.

It is a remarkable fact that our current incident rate, in years when we are completing in excess of two million hours on ropes, is better than throughout our history when we were undertaking a fraction of this number. Members are urged to complete their returns correctly and promptly, and then to maximise the promotional benefit of the message they, and those of your fellow members, convey.

Member Identification

The Association continues to pursue companies in our sector around the world who display our logo and/or claim membership when they do not hold it. Our job would be made much easier if all members displayed their logo and membership number in a prime position on their website and on their stationery – especially their quotations to clients. We are aware there are non-IRATA rope access companies, some of whom are using IRATA-trained technicians, and the guaranteed way of lessening their impact on your business is to clearly and continually publicise your membership number and urge contractors to ask for sight of the same from those competing against you.

Training members should do likewise to identify the fact that they are offering genuine IRATA courses.



IRATA techs at work on the new control tower at Heathrow Airport (Total Access)

Lyon Symposium

This event is on the calendar again this year – Wed 17th September - and those wishing to attend should contact Lyon Equipment directly. The Annual General Meeting (18th) and other committee meetings will be held at Tebay or Penrith venues in the same week.

OSEA 08

The Association plans a significant involvement in this December event in support of our longstanding members in South East Asia. A stand has been booked for the exhibition and a paper submitted for the Conference. It is intended that some senior members of the Association will attend from the UK and Australia and that meeting with local and regional government, industry and others in our sector will be held in addition to a members meeting.

Regional Advisory Committees

We have added South Africa to our list of RACs in SE Asia, Australia, Brazil and North America; this reflects the recent growth in membership in the area. The Association looks to these groups to provide local input into the planning of IRATA's development around the world and contribute to the debate on issues of the moment. Members in these regions are urged to support their RAC Chairman

Technical Co-ordinator

Paul Ramsden is well into this new role with the Association, providing the vital interface between technical queries, committee debate and member input. It is essential that our guidance to our technicians is sound and consistent and that our work mirrors this. Members are urged to talk to Paul on technical issues of training and operational work that concern them and to take note of new directive and advisories that are issues.



IRATA techs cleaning a banner half way up what is planned to be the world's highest building - the Burg Tower in Dubai (Megarme)

TECHNICAL CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

Accident/Incident Returns

Paul Ramsden intends to review "actual" incident reports sent to Irata rather than overall statistics. As Paul is independent of all members, any anonymity concerns should not be a problem.

His view is that with hindsight there are almost certainly lessons to be learned from incidents. You do not have to learn the hard way, if you can read of similar situations that went wrong.

Paul has noticed that many returns had no entry in "remedial action taken following the incident". In future the wording may be changed to **Remedial action taken following the incident to help prevent a reoccurrence**. The plan will be to see if it is appropriate to issue preventative warnings without names, or blame to the whole Irata membership.

We should not be complacent as techniques well known to some, may be unfamiliar to others.

Note: some companies seem to have no incidents and others have quite large numbers. This is not as obvious as it seems, as some companies have a system where everything is reported, large or small and it is presumed others choose not to report unless unavoidable. Near misses are potentially valuable in prompting preventative measures.

Members Forum on IRATA Website

Please make full use of the forums. There are several forums restricted to members of committees, but ideally as much as possible will be on "General Issues", or "Training Issues" forum, which is accessible to all members.



Technical Library

IRATA has a number of various documents, but has not yet established an area on the website where these and web links will be posted. Similarly all training related documents since the 2006 version of *General Requirements* will be collected in one section of website for easy reference by Trainers or Assessors prior to courses, to avoid not to have up to date information. A technical/legislation resource pack for those aspiring to L2 or L3 is envisaged.

Training Matters

Trainers are encouraged to attend what have previously been "assessors' workshops", as they need to deliver what the Assessors are looking for.

The *Irata Instructor Requirements* document hopefully will be ready for consultation shortly. This will be an extra qualification for Level 3s who are able to demonstrate appropriate knowledge together with familiarity and experience in the delivery of training, as well as normal work experience.

A survey has been made of assessor requirements and new assessors will be appointed to try and meet the needs of training members.

Periodically there are disputes between training companies and trainees [or their employers], where the trainee has been assessed, but the course has not been paid for. Irata is unable to issue a certificate without the documents from the training company, but need not be involved, if there had been a contractual agreement between Training member and trainee.

Recent discussions in Training and Executive committees have included the following:

That only logged hours signed off by a Level 3 would be acceptable for upgrades, or re-registrations.

There is a debate as to whether to specify an absolute maximum trainer to trainee ratio, with figures of 1:4 or 1:6 mentioned. Both these matters need wide consultation before being implemented.

A Fall Arrest guidance document for trainers and assessors will be available shortly. Users must be aware that Fall Arrest is a different

system of work from Rope Access, although it is included within the Irata syllabus. It may appear to be a severely assessed part of the syllabus, but since Fall Arrest techniques are deemed to be less effective in the fall protection hierarchy than Work Positioning techniques, a simple mistake or misunderstanding may lead to a hazardous situation.

Shunt in 2 Person Rescue

Please note that a 2-person rescue is extremely unlikely in normal work situations, but takes place many times on every training course. There has been no instance of working line failure during a 2-person rescue, however if what is fairly common practice was followed the shunt would be ineffective.

Note: This refers to specifically to 2-person loading, rather than single person use

After various forum discussions, a simple statement was produced and posted on the website [copied below].

Notice summary: 'TESTS ON BACKUP SYSTEMS UNDER RESCUE LOADS TO REPLICATE RISKS ENCOUNTERED DURING ROUTINE TRAINING' were proposed by and carried out with equipment and facilities provided by Spanset Ltd, during an IRATA Assessors Workshop

The following advice is given even though the situation described below is highly unlikely to occur

SHUNT GUIDANCE

WARNING: If there is a working rope failure during a two-person rescue, a shunt is likely to slip many metres if used in a regular way (ie. slack back-up lanyard/approx fall factor 1)

For users of ALL back-up devices [but particularly shunts] the following advice would be helpful: -

It is good practice at all times to minimise slack in the back-up lanyard, but especially during a two-person rescue. Keep the potential fall distance to an absolute minimum by having minimal slack in the back-up lanyard. [January 2008]

Further advice as to how this could be achieved, was not posted because of differing opinions. There are other related factors such as rope stretch or misuse of the device

There has been an instance of the above warning resulting in Petzl ASAPs being substituted for shunts on the end of waist attached cow's tails. This is dangerous misuse and against product information/website advice. Attention is drawn to audit requirements where manufacturer's product

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information should be available in worksite job packs and training centres. Users of equipment should have read the product instructions for Do's & Don'ts before use.

Tests on shunts with a 2-person load are planned. Some argue this is an inappropriate use of the device and users ought to be looking for different equipment, or ways to avoiding 2-person loading. Users are reminded to use a risk assessment in selecting whatever PPE they use for any particular task.. *Reference BS 8437 Code of practice for selection of personal fall protection systems and equipment.* Some widely used rope adjustment devices are known to have significant disadvantages over alternatives.