



IRATA SAFETY BULLETIN SB41 Adverse Inclement Weather

Adverse Inclement Weather

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Status	Report following Operating member's reports

1. The incident as reported by the Operating Member Company (OMC)

"While carrying out cleaning works on a tall skyscraper the wind suddenly picked up and blew the technicians whom were window cleaning into the building, resulting in minor injuries to the hand and abrasion to the nose. "

"A traditional rescue was not possible due to the high winds and a window was removed and the technicians retrieved safely through the window."

2. Incident analysis as reported by the OMC

"All necessary precautions were taken prior to the incident such as briefings, toolbox talk checks and wind readings with the addition to a senior level 3 on site and radio communication. All safe systems of work were implemented fully and correctly."

"The weather suddenly and dramatically picked up resulting in a couple of technicians being blown into the building and receiving minor injuries."

Root cause: *"High-unexpected wind."*

3. Control measures implemented by the OMC

"Additional wind readings are now taken and recorded throughout the day. During the day when weather is generally poor or adverse the work is done at a different time. The incident was briefed out to the rest of the company and the risk assessment was changed to implement further measures to prevent such incidents occurring in future, such as if there is any doubt that the wind or weather is forecast to be poor the site technicians will consult with a senior IRATA Manager to see if it is safe to work. The site technicians are instructed to be extra vigilant for weather changes and to stop work if there is any doubt of inclement weather either before starting or during the shift."

4. Health and Safety Committee - Recommendations for further control measures

It is important to gain a local weather forecast prior to starting a rope access task, having regular updates and understanding how the weather behaves in the given area when comparing to that forecast e.g. sudden turbulence. Local knowledge may prove useful information also when assessing this.

Adverse weather should be considered when carrying out a risk assessment for a given task where the hazard exists, this assessment should be ongoing as well as initial and take in to account the changing environmental conditions such as wind speed and temperatures.

ICOP 4.2.7.3 provides information on the UK Work at height regulations (WAHR) where under the WAHR; work at height has to be properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a safe manner. This includes the need to plan for emergencies and rescue. In addition, employers are required to ensure that work at height is only carried out when the weather conditions do not jeopardize the health and safety of persons involved in the work (see Regulation 4).

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When considering emergency rescue and evacuation consider rigging for rescue and including a pre- installed lowering / lifting device (e.g. certain descender devices have the capacity to lift and lower in certain configurations, always consult the manufactures product instructions for the given device to ensure suitability) to each anchor line so that technicians working in areas where such a hazard exists can be lowered or lifted remotely, safely and efficiently.

5. Health and Safety Committee - Recommendations for further reading

- For further information on identifying hazards and measuring risk reference **ICOP 2.2.4 & Annex A – Risk assessment;**
- For further information on safe execution of sequence of procedure reference **ICOP Annex B – Safety method statements;**
- Information on **Emergency procedures** reference **ICOP 1.4.2.7 & 2.11.11**
- Keep a look out on www.irata.org for revised IRATA ICOP Annex O, this annex is currently being reviewed by the ICOP development and review panel (provisionally retitled Protecting against environmental conditions) and will include guidance and information on the effects of working in windy environments. Expected release December 2015.