


Doc. No.: HS-092ENG	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Topic Sheet No. 12</h1> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Hazard identification/risk assessment</h2>	
Date of Issue: 16/05/17		
Issue No.: 001		
Page 1 of 4		

*A topic sheet prepared by © IRATA International (2017)*

## SAFETY AND HEALTH TOPIC SHEET NO. 12: HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

*A safety and health 'topic sheet' aimed at raising awareness of hazards in the rope access industry. The series may be of use as a toolbox talk.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 As well as being a legislative requirement, hazard identification and risk assessment are important. Undertaking work at a height introduces increased risk. In simple terms:

- a **hazard** is something that has the potential to cause harm to any person, property or animal; and
- a **risk** is the likelihood of that harm actually occurring.

### 2 WHAT CAN GO WRONG ...

2.1 Even the simplest of tasks can carry an increased level of risk when undertaken at height, e.g. changing a battery or a drill bit can result in a serious incident if they are dropped. Likewise, a relatively small injury, sprain or muscle tear can become very serious when working at height. Any number of small incidents can be increased in severity when happening at height.

#### Case study

A wind turbine nacelle was incorrectly isolated by the on-site supervisor. As a result, the nacelle rotated slightly whilst two rope access technicians were descending over the edge at the top of the nacelle. -

The technicians immediately made themselves safe and called the on-site supervisor. The work was put on hold whilst the rope access team and on-site supervisor investigated what had gone wrong. No one was hurt.

### 3 WHY THINGS CAN GO WRONG ...

3.1 Managers, supervisors and technicians sometimes underestimate things with the potential to cause harm (the hazard). They do not:

- (a) check manufacturers' instructions;
- (b) look back at accident and ill-health records – that may help identify the less obvious hazards;
- (c) think about the issues that surround the rope access work itself;
- (d) take into account the advice and guidance available, e.g. ICOP.

3.2 Those involved do not always understand the risk assessment process. Sometimes, the technicians are not consulted.

### 4 WHAT YOU CAN DO ...

4.1 You should:

# Topic Sheet No. 12

## Hazard identification/risk assessment



- (a) accurately identify potential hazards in your workplace;
- (b) think how employees might be harmed (or others who may be present, such as contractors or visitors);
- (c) decide how likely it is that harm will occur, i.e. the level of risk, and what to do about it;
- (d) make a record of significant findings;
- (e) review what you are doing on an ongoing basis.

4.2 All those involved in a task can contribute to hazard identification and risk assessment. You may not have been involved in the initial planning, but risk assessment is a continual process and goes beyond the initial paperwork.

4.3 The 'SLAM' technique reminds workers to stop work if they think their health and safety is at risk:

### Stop

- Stop the task and think. Look at each step.

### Look

- Look before, during and after completion of the task.

### Assess

- Are workers equipped to perform the task safely?
- What else do they need to perform the task safely?

### Manage

- Managers or site rope access safety supervisors should take appropriate action to eliminate or minimise any hazards on site.

## 5 HOW YOU CAN DO IT ...

5.1 Ensure that the process for risk assessment and hazard awareness used is:

- Site specific;
- Task specific;
- Comprehensive;
- Simple to understand;
- Continuous; and
- Inclusive of all those involved.

5.2 Ask:

- Is this a new task?
- Has the task changed?
- When was the last time I did this task?
- Do I feel comfortable doing this task?
- If not, do I need training?
- Are isolation(s) required?

# Topic Sheet No. 12

## Hazard identification/risk assessment



## 6 ACTION

- 7.1 Review your management system's procedures for hazard identification and risk assessment.

## 7 REFERENCES

- 7.1 Further information can be found in:

- (a) IRATA International code of practice for industrial rope access (Third edition, September 2016)<sup>1</sup>:
  - Part 2, 2.4, Risk assessment
  - Part 3, Annex A, Risk assessment
- (b) Training, Assessment and Certification Scheme (TACS) for personnel engaged in industrial rope access methods (Edition 3.1, October 2015)<sup>2</sup>:
  - 6.2.3, Hazard identification and risk assessment

- 7.2 For a list of current (and past) 'safety communications' by IRATA, see [www.irata.org](http://www.irata.org)

## 8 RECORD FORM

- 8.1 An example *Safety and Health Topic Sheet: Record Form* is given below. Members may have their own procedure(s) for recording briefings to technicians and others.

## 9 FURTHER READING

Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace, HSE, INDG163<sup>3</sup>  
Leadership and worker involvement toolkit, The SLAM technique, HSE<sup>4</sup>  
Leadership and worker involvement toolkit, HSE<sup>5</sup>

---

1 [www.irata.org/default.php?cmd=215&doc\\_id=4336](http://www.irata.org/default.php?cmd=215&doc_id=4336)

2 [www.irata.org/default.php?cmd=215&doc\\_id=4193](http://www.irata.org/default.php?cmd=215&doc_id=4193)

3 [www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/indg163.pdf)

4 [www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/assets/downloads/slam.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/assets/downloads/slam.pdf)

5 [www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/lwit/index.htm)

# Topic Sheet No. 12

## Hazard identification/risk assessment



### IRATA SAFETY AND HEALTH TOPIC SHEET – RECORD FORM

<b>Site:</b>	
--------------	--

<b>Date:</b>	
--------------	--

<b>Topic(s) for discussion:</b>	Topic Sheet No. 12: Hazard identification and risk assessment
---------------------------------	--

<b>Reason for talk:</b>	
-------------------------	--

<b>Start time:</b>		<b>Finish time:</b>	
--------------------	--	---------------------	--

**Attended by**  
*Please sign to verify understanding of briefing*

<b>Print name:</b>	<b>Signature:</b>
--------------------	-------------------

--	--

--	--

--	--

--	--

--	--

--	--

--	--

*Continue overleaf (where necessary)*

<b>Matters raised by employees:</b>	<b>Action taken as a result:</b>
-------------------------------------	----------------------------------

--	--

--	--

--	--

*Continue overleaf (where necessary)*

**Briefing leader**  
*I confirm I have delivered this briefing and have questioned those attending on the topic discussed.*

<b>Print name:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
--------------------	--	-------------------	--	--------------	--

<b>Comments:</b>	
------------------	--