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Guidance on the use of Permanent Installed Suspended Access Equipment (PISAE)

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Disclaimer: Whilst every effort has been made to provide reliable and accurate information, we would continually invite any corrections to information-which may not be entirely accurate, accordingly, for this reason, SAEMA cannot accept responsibility for any misinformation posted.

1. SAEMA Position

1.1 SAEMA recommends that all in-service activities concerning suspended access equipment use BS 6037 as a baseline since, as a code of practice, it is considered to be 'good practice'. Failure to comply with BS 6037 may result in successful prosecution in legal action.

2. Scope

2.1 The principal aim of this document is to provide guidance to Duty Holders, and Operators of suspended access equipment on how they can carry out their work in a safe, structured and orderly manner.

3. Regulations and Standards

3.1 Other information relating to this document can be found in:

- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations - particularly regulation 3(1)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER98)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER 98)
- BS 6037-1: 2003 Code of practice for the planning, design, installation and use of permanently installed access equipment - Part 1 Suspended Access Equipment
- BS 6037-2: 2004 Code of practice for the planning, design, installation and use of permanently installed access equipment - Part 2 Travelling ladders and gantries.
- HSG150: Health and Safety in Construction
- HSG33: Health & Safety in Roof work
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

4. Terms and Definitions

Duty Holder is defined in BS 6037 as a "designated person with management responsibility for the safe use, maintenance and thorough examination of suspended access equipment".

5. Duty Holder's Responsibilities

5.1 Permanently Installed Suspended access equipment (PISAE) is an often overlooked but essential part of a building's services. A well-designed and maintained system is a cost-effective asset to the building it serves. It is the Duty Holder who is legally responsible for ensuring that PISAE is:

- Safe and fit for the purpose for which it was designed
- Properly maintained, tested and examined.
- Used by adequately competent and trained operatives
- Proper records are kept including but not limited to:
 - Service Reports,
 - Test Certificates;
 - LOLER Reports;
 - Training Certificates and
 - O and M Manuals.

5.2 Duty Holders should note that they have legal duties and responsibilities for the Permanently Installed Suspended Access Equipment and for all those that use it.

Those duties and responsibilities are stated in The Provision of Work Equipment Regulations, 1998 (PUWER), Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations, 1998. (LOLER) and the Work at Height Regulations 2005. Following The Code of Practice for the planning, design, installation and use of permanently installed access equipment, (BS 6037-1:2003 and 6037-2:2004) may assist in compliance.

To ignore these documents exposes the Duty Holder to prosecution under this and other safety legislation.

Note: A Duty Holder is defined in BS 6037 as a “designated person with management responsibility for the safe use, maintenance and thorough examination of suspended access equipment”.

6. Health and Safety

6.1 Duty Holders are legally responsible to ensure that a risk assessment for the use of Permanently Installed Suspended Access Equipment, is carried out. Safe access routes to the equipment must be included in the assessment and all hazard control measures implemented.

Typical hazards to be addressed in the Risk Assessment are:

- Adverse weather including high winds, ice, snow, lightning etc.
- Falling objects from the working platform
- Falling of persons from height
- Falling objects onto the working platform when in use
- Failure of Equipment whilst in use.
- Trapped body parts against building / crushing injuries
- Mechanical / Electrical supply failure
- Accidental collision.
- Unauthorised use

Note: The above list is not exhaustive. (See BS 6037 for further hazards)

6.2 Duty Holders may consider it necessary to provide a further building induction process that operatives should attend before being allowed on site.

6.3 Only suitably trained persons shall use suspended access equipment.

6.4 Normally, operators will be window cleaners, facade maintenance personnel or members of the company employed to maintain suspended access equipment.

Comprehensive operator training is essential for safe use of any equipment. Operator training in PISAE is available by contacting SAEMA.

6.4 Although one person can operate some types of suspended access equipment, for safety reasons, operators will frequently be in teams of at least two people. On all installations, the size of the team should be appropriate to the task to be undertaken.

6.5 The Duty Holder must also have in place a suitable rescue plan.

Note: For guidance on lone working see SAEMA Document No. SDN 14008

Note: For Guidance in the preparation of a rescue plan see SAEMA Document No. SDN 14001

7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

7.1. Appropriate PPE may include:

- Safety helmet plus chin strap
- Gloves
- Safety footwear
- Hi-vis clothing
- Suitable Safety harness/lanyard

8. Health and Safety Checking Process

- **Documentation/Paperwork**
- **Site Checks**
- **Equipment and pre-use checks**

8.1 Documentation/Paperwork

8.1.1 The duty holder must ensure that the equipment operating manuals and any other relevant documents are available and that these have been read and understood by all SAE users.

8.1.2 Load Test Certificate Ensure that the Load Test Certificate is current and that there is a current LOLER report as evidence of a thorough examination. If either one of these documents is NOT available, DO NOT use the equipment.

8.1.3 Risk assessment

Ensure a Risk Assessment has been carried out, read and understood.

8.2 Site Checks

8.2.1 When attending site. Prior to using the suspended access equipment, review the Risk Assessment to ensure that no changes to the hazards have occurred.

- a) Implement all the hazard control measures specified in the working Risk Assessment.
- b) Where it is not possible to implement the controls, consideration must be given to abandoning using the suspended access equipment until such time as the controls can be implemented.
- c) If additional hazards are noted these should be reported and no work should be commenced until safety measures for the additional hazards have been put in place.

8.2.2 Information plates (ID plates) etc.

All Information/ID plates must match the suspended access equipment inventory (also known as the equipment schedule or the equipment log). In addition, suspended platforms (cradles) should only be used with designated suspension rigs; the platform's information plate should say which suspension rigs it may be suspended from.

8.2.3. Equipment 'out of service'. Ensure that the equipment to be used is not 'out of service'. Any equipment that is not in service should have an 'Out of Service' notice prominently displayed on it, e.g. a Scaffold tag

8.2.4. Check the weather forecast beforehand. Do not use the equipment during adverse weather conditions, particularly high winds or electrical storms.

8.2.5 Obtain all the relevant equipment and/or documents as required e.g.

- Work permits
- Access door keys or passes
- Equipment keys
- Anemometer
- Emergency procedures, etc.
- Communication Device

8.2.6. Communications

8.2.7 Communications can be either by voice, intercom, radio, hand signals or mobile phone. An assessment should be made at the time to decide which form of communication is the most suitable, taking various factors into consideration such as:

- Wind carries away the sound of voices
- Rain might damage sensitive equipment
- Bright sunlight impairing vision of intended observers of hand signals
- Lightning storms are particularly dangerous when using radios or mobile phones and SAE should not be operated in these conditions
- Some hospitals and other establishments do not allow the use of mobile phones on the premises
- Radio signals may be blocked due to intervening buildings
- The MOD do not allow unauthorised radio transmissions
- The MOD might not allow the use of mobile phones
- Airside restrictions at airports

Note: The above list is not exhaustive

8.3. Equipment and Pre-Use Checks.

8.3.1 Check the Wind Speed

Before commencing and during work, use an anemometer or other Wind-Indicating Device to check the wind speed.

The safe wind conditions should be in the suspended access equipment's operating manual, manufacturer's instructions or in the building manual. However, if none of those documents specify a safe wind speed, SAEMA recommends not using the platform if the constant wind speed exceeds:

7 metres per second (15mph)

Even though this is a recommended MAXIMUM speed, it might be that even this speed is too high. Operators should take extra care of funnelling effects (for example, between two buildings or plant rooms) and be particularly careful near roof edges and building corners, etc where wind speeds can easily double

8.3.2 General communication checks:

- Intercoms, where fitted - check that the sound is clear and audible
- Two-way radios - should be in good working order, set to the same frequency and the batteries charged
- Mobile phones - check that phones have a signal and are fully charged, and that everyone concerned has a list of all the relevant telephone numbers

8.3.3 Working Areas. Check the working areas below the platform are clear and free from obstructions, e.g. vehicles, people, open windows and other lifting equipment.

8.3.4 Overhead Working. Overhead' signs and/or barriers may need to be placed below the area of works wherever there is a possibility of third parties accessing the vicinity below.
Do not forget access to Working the Area from side doors, alleyways etc.

8.4 Visual Inspection

8.4.1 Check all the equipment to be used. This includes the following:

- The equipment should be complete and serviceable
- The information plates (ID plates), etc must match the suspended access equipment inventory (also known as the equipment schedule or the equipment log)
- Look for signs of corrosion, damage, distress, dislodged items and overstrain, etc.
- Suspension ropes should be in good condition with no obvious signs of wear or kinking.
- Check Manufacturers manual and perform any daily checks as recommended.
- If the equipment is electrically powered, check that the RCD's operate correctly where fitted
- Any power cables and their connections etc should have no obvious signs of defects.
- The runway and surrounding areas should be clear of obstructions.
- Check the platform is reasonable and free of bird droppings and other debris. If dissatisfied inform Building Manager (Duty Holder) to allow for "Specialist Cleaning" of the platform if necessary.

9. Rigging Platforms

9.1 Platform Rigging Operations. During platform rigging operations, where wire ropes are to be hauled up to, or lowered down from a suspension point, extra care should be taken. This is a hazardous operation, to be carried out by trained operatives only and should be risk assessed by a competent person. Some hazards to be considered are:-

- Safe access to rigging points and hooks
- Operatives falling
- Operatives overreaching
- Dropping objects, e.g. hauling ropes or equipment (e.g. weights)
- Manual handling
- Weight of power cable and hauling rope
- Friction abrasion
- Cladding could cut rope (and cause damage to building)
- Swinging hooks adjacent to glass
- Incorrect fitting of safety hook to anchor point.
- Crossing of main and secondary suspension wire ropes

Note: *The above list is not exhaustive.*

9.2 Operators Manual.

9.2.1. In the absence of any specific information the operators' manual should be used.

10. Safe Use of Suspended Access Equipment

10.1 Operate the suspended access equipment as specified in the equipment operating instructions.

- Do not use when lightning strikes are imminent. Do not use in icy or laying snow conditions.
- No persons are to use the BMU or enter the platform unless authorised by the Duty Holder and are in receipt of a valid permit to work, have received the appropriate training from the BMU installer and have signed to confirm acceptance of the Risk assessment.
- All users to be competent in working at height / façade work if carrying out physical work.
- Carry out pre-start daily check on the BMU prior to use. See 7.4 above. DO THIS EVERY DAY.
- Do not use the BMU as a crane unless specifically authorised and the BMU is re-commissioned for this use.
- Third trained person to be available and contactable on stand-by in case of emergency.
- Form an exclusion zone beneath the BMU platform work area and install CAUTION – PERSONS WORKING ABOVE signage. At roof level above the work area install a signed zone stating CAUTION – PERSONS WORKING BELOW IN BMU.
- Do not move the BMU unless you are fully aware that the track and the area in the vicinity of the BMU is clear.
- Affix signage at roof level stating CAUTION – Building maintenance unit in operation.
- Do not put body parts between the platform and building at any time.
- Ensure buffering is secure and in place to protect building strikes.
- STOP work if you feel ill or tired.
- Never overload the platform.

Never assume that the platform is safe to carry two people.

10.2 Access, Egress and Operation of the Platform.

- Always access or exit the platform from a safe and approved place.
- Attach the hook on the safety-harness lanyard to a designated PPE attachment point in the platform, before manoeuvring the platform
- Secure all loose items, perhaps by tethering them to the platform. Even the smallest of items dropped from a height can kill.
- The platform should remain on a safe surface until movement is required. Additional personnel may need to guide the platform's initial movements
- When manoeuvring around be constantly aware of obstructions and projections from the building facade - for example, flagpoles, CCTV cameras, soil pipes, external staircases etc. Platforms can be "fended off" the building or around obstructions by pushing with the hands where necessary.
- Always use any facade restraints provided.
- Do not leave a platform unattended where it could be misused or cause damage. Always isolate the power supply, remove any keys and secure the equipment to prevent unauthorised use or movement by wind or weather conditions.
- Lifting apparatus should not be used from any part of the suspended access equipment unless specifically detailed in the operators' manual.
- Adequate ventilation should be available to minimise the inhalation of carbon monoxide and other noxious gases (e.g. from vehicle exhausts). Don't work below street level where adequate ventilation is not available.
- Be aware of the risks associated when passing or working close to microwave antennas. If in any doubt refer your concerns to the Building Manager (Duty Holder)

11. Breakdowns / Malfunctions

11.1 In common with all mechanical and electrical equipment, breakdowns occasionally happen. As a general rule, obtain assistance by alerting building management or on-site security who should have procedures in place to deal with such situations.

11.2 As soon as possible after the incident, write down details of the breakdown / malfunction and ensure that both your employer and the Duty Holder receives a copy.

Note: For further guidance in the preparation of a rescue plan see SAEMA Document No. SDN 14001

12. Completion of Work

- 12.1. On completion of the works, the suspended access equipment should be returned to its designated parking position, switched off and isolated from its power supply, unless the Operations and Maintenance Manual specifically requires the equipment to have constant power for heaters/fans etc.
- 12.2. Fit weatherproof covers, if available.
- 12.3. Apply storm brakes, where fitted.
- 12.4. Platforms left suspended over the sides of buildings should be adequately secured to prevent movement.
- 12.5. Any damage or defect should be identified and reported to the duty holder's representative. If necessary, the equipment should be placed out of service and fitted with an appropriate '**Out Of Service**' sign.
- 12.6. Remove tools, work equipment and rubbish from site.
- 12.7. To reduce the possibility of infection or spread of infectious diseases, personnel should wash their hands as soon as possible after completing the works.

13. Signing Out Procedure

- 13.1. Before leaving the premises, the user should return all items listed and also confirm that they have left the site. They should complete a visit sheet and sign it;
- 13.2. Where possible the Duty Holder's representative should then countersign this. At least one copy should be left with the Duty Holder's representative for the site log.