



---

## Guide to Using Components of Existing Suspended Access Equipment as Anchorage Points for Industrial Rope Access

### **Disclaimer**

**Whilst every effort has been made to provide reliable and accurate information, SAEMA cannot take responsibility for any omissions, misinformation or errors in relation to this publication. We welcome any correction or additional information that is relevant to the interpretation of this Guidance Document. From time to time this publication may be updated and readers should be aware that the document they are relying on may not be the latest edition. Always check the SAEMA website to ascertain what the current document edition number is.**

# CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Suspended access equipment.....	3
3. Change of Use of Suspended access equipment.....	4
4. Industrial Rope Access Loads .....	6
5. SAEMA Position.....	6
6. Regulations, Standards and Guidance Notes Applicable to Permanent Access Equipment Selection .....	7

## 1. Introduction

This document has been created to provide guidance for individuals considering the use of existing suspended access equipment (e.g., building maintenance unit tracks) as anchorage points for industrial rope access activities. This includes facilities managers, building owners, main contractors, and other parties acting as duty holders.

Members of SAEMA have observed instances where suspended access systems have been used incorrectly or unsafely as anchors for industrial rope access, or where proposals have been made to repurpose such systems without due consideration.

The objective of this guidance document is to assist in evaluating the suitability of existing suspended access equipment as anchorage for industrial rope access, and to provide recommendations regarding the required verification process and necessary documentation.

All personnel involved in planning, organising, or executing industrial rope access work must comply with relevant industrial rope access standards, approved codes of practice (ACOPs), and refer to the requirements outlined in the IRATA code of practice.

## 2. Suspended Access Equipment

Suspended access equipment includes not only building maintenance units (BMUs) but also the additional equipment listed below. It is important to acknowledge that the load requirements for industrial rope access are often more rigorous than those for suspended access systems. Consequently, equipment commonly utilised in industrial rope access operations – such as davit arms and monorails – should not be presumed suitable for these applications without verification. Such products may not be engineered to meet the specific standards necessary for industrial rope access and could lack the capacity to accommodate the higher loads typically experienced during these procedures.

- BMU
- BMU tracks
- BMU track anchorages
- Monorails
- Monorail trolleys
- Powered cradles
- Gantries and travelling ladders
- Davits
- Parapet trolleys

### 3. Change of Use of Suspended Access Equipment

Existing suspended access equipment is **NOT** designed for use as anchorages for industrial rope access. Under no circumstances should an IRATA Level 3 rope access technician make the assumption that any component of a suspended access system is of unquestionable strength or that it is capable of taking the minimum required loading for industrial rope access.

On a building designed to accommodate suspended access equipment, it is likely that the broader building structure has not been designed to support industrial rope access. Additional considerations relevant to industrial rope access include:

- the effects of pedestrian loading on façade panels, copings, balustrades etc.
- the vectored forces exerted by ropes at deviation points such as parapets, balustrades, coping details, brise soleil, mullions and transom details, transitions between inclined and vertical façades, as well as negative-inclined façades where rope deviation and 'pulling forces' may be required to facilitate cleaning and maintenance.
- abrasive surfaces
- rescue strategies

Where suspended access equipment is proposed to be used as permanent anchorages for industrial rope access, the following process should be followed and carefully documented.

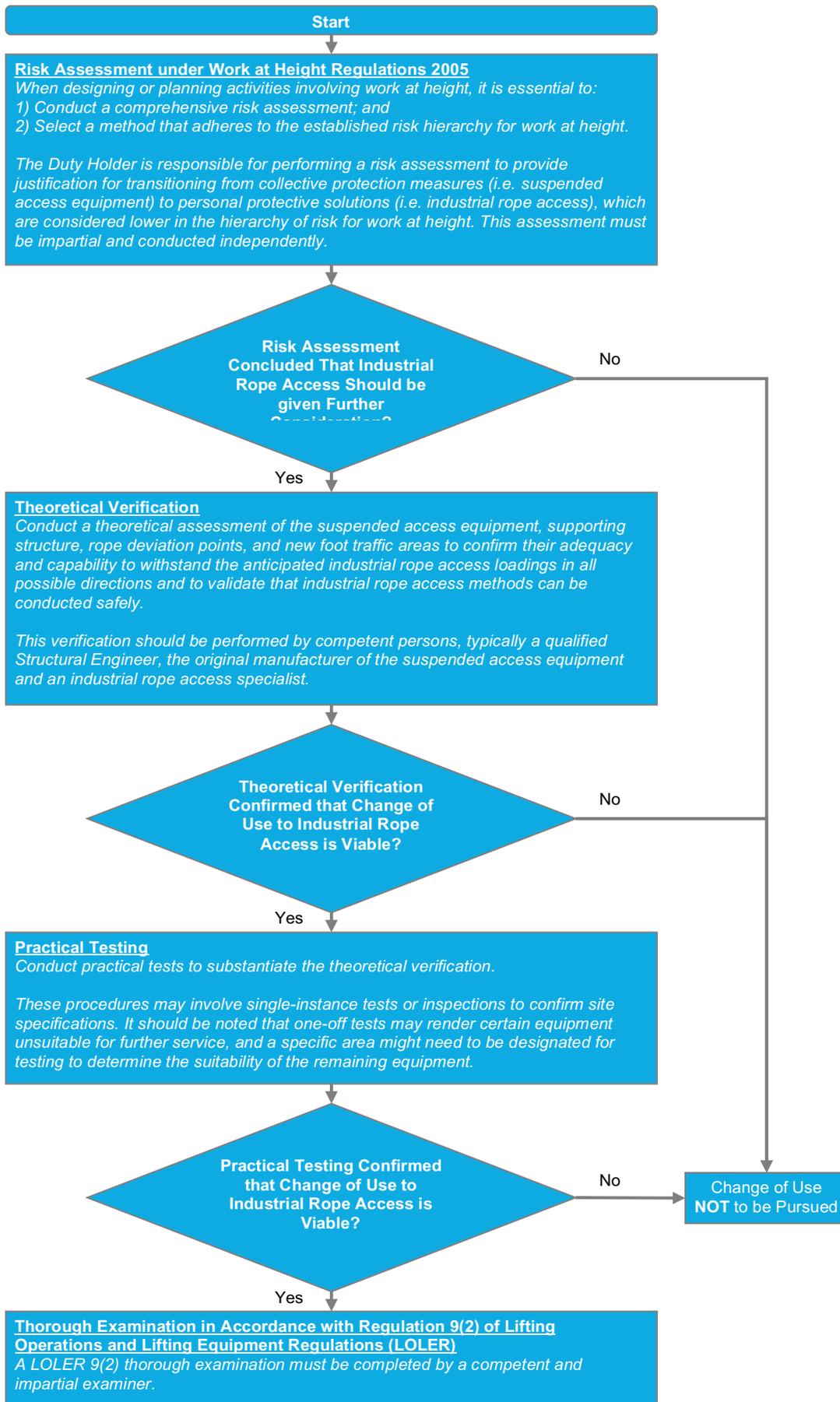


Figure 1 - Suspended Access Equipment Change of Use Process

#### **4. Industrial Rope Access Loads**

Annexes A, B, and C of BS 7883:2019, 'Personal Fall Protection Equipment – Anchor Systems – System Design, Installation and Inspection – Code of Practice', offer guidance regarding the service and design loads that must be considered for industrial rope access applications. Section 5 addresses key design considerations, while Section 5.2 outlines the procedures for calculating vectored forces that may be exerted on the building structure.

#### **5. SAEMA Position**

We acknowledge that there may be a need for industrial rope access on a building but the decision to use this form of access should not be taken lightly when changing from permanent suspended access equipment to an industrial rope access solution.

Industrial rope access is perfectly acceptable if designed, maintained, examined and certified correctly in accordance current regulations.

## 6. Applicable Regulations, Standards and Guidance Notes

Table 1 - Summary of Applicable Regulations, Standards and Guidance Notes

Building Maintenance Unit (BMU)	Applicable To						Regulations / Standards / Guidance Applicable to Façade Access Systems	Notes
	Monorail & Powered Cradle	Davit & Powered Cradle	Rope Access Monorails	Rope Access Davits	Rope Access Anchors	Rope Access Deviation Rail / Points		
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Building Safety Act 2022	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The Machinery Directive, Directive 2006/42/EC	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The Work at Height Regulations 2005	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 8560:2012+A1:2018 - Code of practice for the design of buildings incorporating safe work at height	
✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	BS EN 1808:2015 - Safety requirements for suspended access equipment. Design calculations, stability criteria, construction. Examinations and tests	
✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	BS 6037-1:2017 - Planning, design, installation and use of permanently installed access equipment. Code of practice - Suspended access equipment	
✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	BS 6037-2:2020 - Planning, design, installation and use of permanently installed access equipment - Travelling ladders and gantries. Code of practice	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 7883:2019 - Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor systems. System design, installation and inspection. Code of practice	
✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 7985:2013 - Code of practice for the use of rope access methods for industrial purposes. Recommendations and guidance supplementary to BS ISO 22846	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 8437:2022 - Code of practice for selection, use and maintenance of personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in the workplace	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 8610:2017 - Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor systems. Specification	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS EN 795:2012 - Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor devices	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	PD CEN/TS 16415:2013 - Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor devices. Recommendations for anchor devices for use by more than one person simultaneously	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS EN 17235:2024 - Permanent anchor devices and safety hooks	
✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	BS 8681:2024 - Personal fall protection equipment. Anchor systems. Specification for provider competence	
✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	IRATA ICOP Part 3 Annex F 2013 - Safety considerations when installing or placing anchor devices for use in rope access	