



Guidance for members – LOLER Thorough Examination of Temporary Suspended Access Systems

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1. Introduction

This guidance is intended for use by SAEMA members involved in the design, installation, inspection, and certification of Temporary Suspended Access (TSA) systems. Its purpose is to assist members in meeting their obligations under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998, as well as related legislation and relevant standards.

Under LOLER, Temporary Suspended Access Equipment must undergo a Thorough Examination:

- Before first use in any given configuration, and
- At least every six months during its service life, or more frequently where required by risk assessment.

LOLER requires that Thorough Examination is undertaken by a Competent Person who is sufficiently independent and impartial to ensure objective judgement regarding the equipment's safety and suitability for continued use.

2. Purpose

Temporary Suspended Access systems can be assembled from a range of components ranging from modular, scaffold-based, temporary structural elements, or bespoke manufactured components. The complexity of each installation determines:

- The extent of the Thorough Examination required
- The level of competence required of the examiner
- The appropriate inspection methodology

This guidance outlines good industry practice to help SAEMA members ensure consistent, compliant, and safe examination procedures.

3. Typical Temporary Suspended Access Systems

A TSA system typically consists of suspension rigs supporting a temporary platform. The complexity is categorised into three levels for both the suspension rig and the platform.

3.1 Suspension Rig Categories

Level 1 – Modular Suspension Rig

A simple arrangement assembled from standard modular components manufactured in accordance with BS EN 1808.

These systems must always be assembled exactly as instructed in the manufacturer's operating manual.

Level 2 – Mixed Modular/Scaffold Suspension Rig

A more complex rig assembled using a combination of modular components and scaffold elements, potentially requiring a scaffold design compliant with TG20 or bespoke engineering.

Level 3 – Bespoke Engineered Suspension Rig

A fully engineered system incorporating bespoke components, modular items, scaffold elements, and/or fabricated steel/aluminium assemblies.

A full structural engineering design is required.

3.2 Platform Categories

A temporary suspended platform typically comprises:

- Suspension wire ropes
- Secondary (safety) wire ropes
- Powered hoists
- Overspeed safety devices
- A working platform or deck

Level 1 Platform

A standard modular platform constructed from components supported by individual manufacturer data sheets and compliant with BS EN 1808. For example, a 4 m deck suspended from two hoists and two safety devices, using four wire ropes, all in accordance with the manufacturer's manual and specifications.

Level 2 Platform

A more complex platform including any of the following:

- More than two hoists
- Special configurations permitted within manufacturer guidance (e.g., corner platforms, circular platforms)

Level 3 Bespoke Platform

A platform designed specifically for a unique application and outside the scope of standard manufacturer instructions.

May include:

- Custom-built decks
- Tailor-made platform geometries
- Specially engineered interfaces
- Modular elements combined with bespoke components

4. Competent Person

Under LOLER, a Competent Person is defined as someone with sufficient practical and theoretical knowledge, along with relevant experience, to identify defects, determine their significance, and make objective judgements regarding continued safe use.

They must also be independent and impartial to avoid conflicts of interest.

SAEMA recommends the following examiner categories:

Level 1 Examiner

- Suitably trained and experienced
- Directly involved in the design or installation of the system
- Appropriate for Level 1 systems only

Level 2 Examiner

- Suitably trained and experienced
- Employed by the installing company
- Not directly involved in design or installation of the specific system being examined
- Appropriate for Level 1 or Level 2 systems

Level 3 Examiner

- Suitably trained and experienced
- Employed by an independent company
- Appropriate for any system, especially Level 3
- Ensures independence where complexity or risk is highest

5. Selecting the Right Examiner

The complexity level of the suspension rig and platform determines the required level of examiner. The highest of the two governs the minimum examiner level.

Table 1: Required Examiner Level

Suspension Rig Complexity → Platform Complexity ↓	Level 1 Rig	Level 2 Rig	Level 3 Rig
Level 1 Platform	Level 1 Examiner	Level 2 Examiner	Level 3 Examiner
Level 2 Platform	Level 2 Examiner	Level 2 Examiner	Level 3 Examiner
Level 3 Platform	Level 3 Examiner	Level 3 Examiner	Level 3 Examiner

6. SAEMA Position

SAEMA emphasises the importance of appointing a competent, impartial, and appropriately qualified examiner whose level corresponds to the highest complexity element of the system.

This guidance promotes:

- Consistency across the industry
- Compliance with legal requirements
- Improved safety for users of temporary suspended access equipment
- Clear accountability and traceability in the examination process

Members should maintain up-to-date training records, design documentation, and certification procedures that align with this guidance.

7. Reference Regulations and Standards

(Updated to incorporate additional standards as per feedback)

The following standards and regulations informed the development of this guidance. This list is not exhaustive; additional standards may be relevant depending on application and equipment type.

Legislation

- Work at Height Regulations (WAHR) 2005
- LOLER 1998: Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations
- PUWER 1998: Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations

Suspended Access and Scaffold Standards

- BS EN 1808 – Safety requirements for suspended access equipment
- BS 5974:2017 – Code of practice for temporary suspended access equipment *(added per reviewer comment)*
- BS 6037-1:2003 – Permanently installed suspended access equipment
- BS 6037-2:2004 – Travelling ladders and gantries

Rope Access & Harness Standards

- EN 361:2002 – Full body harnesses
- EN 358 – Work positioning systems
- EN 813 – Sit harnesses
- BS 7985:2012 – Rope access methods
- IRATA ICOP (2014) – Industrial rope access code of practice

Anchorage Standards

- BS 7985 Part 3 Annex F (2013) – Anchor devices – considerations