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Guidance document on Lone Working arrangements – Operation, testing, inspection, maintenance and thorough examination of facade access equipment..

1. Introduction

The aim is to provide some guidance to assist with possible actions and planning for lone working arrangements – Operation, testing, inspection, maintenance and thorough examination of facade access equipment.

HASWA 1974 – It shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees.

Duty holders have a responsibility for ensuring (WAHR:2005, regulation 4, ensure that the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable)

HSE guidance note – INDG73 Working alone - gives further guidance

2. SAEMA position.

Employers need to ensure that their employees remain healthy and safe whilst at work; this includes working in and around buildings and in remote or isolated areas. The basis for developing any procedure is through completion of a thorough risk assessment and then applying the findings to develop suitable safe working practices.

3. Risk assessment for lone working.

The procedure for carrying out risk assessments is no different from the normal work place

Risk assessment process:-

- A. Identify the hazards
- B. Decide who can be harmed and how
- C. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- D. Record your findings and implement them
- E. Monitor and update them as necessary

A. The Hazards (things with the potential to cause harm)

Listed below are a sample of hazards applicable to Façade Access working situations they may be exacerbated by the working area and fact that a person is alone and perhaps not in the immediate vicinity of aide and assistance.

e.g.

• Working at height

- Fall risks due to location of equipment
- Sail effect of lifting large panels to expose machinery
- Climbing in and out of cradle to operate limit switches and controls
- Rigging of equipment
- Accessing the work area, from ladders, mobile elevated work platforms, hatches etc
- Rescue from façade access equipment due to breakdown or sudden illness
- Operation of equipment emergency lowering may be a two person operation.
- Sudden illness rendering the worker unable to summon help
- Rescue - from harness due to fall arrest scenario.
- Weather (High winds, Rain, Ice and snow, hot sunny weather)
- Electric shocks
- Entrapment in moving parts.
- Faulty equipment
- Fire

- **Working at height (Continued)**

- Manual handling heavy or unwieldy loads – Large cover panels on equipment, weights for load testing.
- Equipment rigging is often a two person operation
- Poor or lack of training
- Pregnant or young workers
- Remoteness or isolation
- Working in confined spaces

- **Working over or near water**

B. Decide who can be harmed and how.

- In this case we are only considering the lone worker

C. Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures.

In consultation with employees, and their representatives, decide on the level of risk posed by the situation.

This will determine whether or not extra controls are required, or whether or not the job can be undertaken safely by a single person.

Depending on the results you may need to insist that the high risk work is completed by more than one operative.

Example of control measures may include but not be limited to the following:-

- Access to communications
- Automatic warning devices
- First aid equipment & training
- Further specialist training.
- Introducing a “buddy system”
- Lifting equipment
- Out of office recording procedures
- Periodic supervisory checks
- Personal alarms
- Safe working practices
- Security staff

D. Record your findings and implement them

- Complete, document and record the risk assessment, which should be simple and focused on the control measures.

E. Monitor and update them as necessary.

- Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, changes will occur
- New workers or working practices / procedures that could lead to new hazards.
- Review what you are doing on an on-going basis, and check your risk assessment again asking the following questions:-
 - i. Have there been any significant changes?
 - ii. Are there improvements you still need to make?
 - iii. Have your workers spotted a problem?
 - iv. Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

4. Conclusion

Due to the nature and risk of the tasks required to complete the testing, inspection, maintenance and thorough examination of Facade access equipment it is the view of SAEMA that in the vast majority of cases the work should be completed by a team of no less than two individuals. SAEMA accepts that in certain situations effective controls can be introduced that reduce the residual risk to an acceptable level, thereby permitting lone working to take place.