



D2E Guidance

On The Use of
Permanent Suspended
Access Equipment
2016





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Access Equipment

Client All

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1 Duty Holders Responsibility

Suspended Access Equipment (SAE) is an often overlooked but essential part of a buildings services. A well designed and maintained system is a cost effective asset to the building it serves. It is the role of the duty holder who is legally responsible for ensuring that SAE is:

- Safe and fit for the purpose to 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
 - Operation and Maintenance manuals

Duty holders should note that they have legal duties and responsibilities for the SAE 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 and BS 6037-2) may assist with compliance.

To ignore these documents exposes the duty holder to prosecution under this and other safety legislation.

NB. 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".

2 Regulations and Standards

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 (PUWER)
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)



- 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 and Safety in Roof Work
- The Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

2.1 D2E Position

D2E 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.

3 Purpose

The principle 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.

It should also help duty holders to better understand what is required of operators. Normally, operators will be window cleaners, façade maintenance personnel or members of the company employed to maintain suspended access equipment.

4 Health and Safety

Duty holders are legally responsible to ensure that a risk assessment for the use of the suspended access equipment is carried out. Safe access routes to the equipment must be included in the risk 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

NB. This list is not exhaustive (see BS 6037 for further hazards)

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

Only suitably trained persons shall use suspended access equipment.

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.

NB. For guidance on lone working see SAEMA document SDN14008

The duty holder must also have in place a rescue plan.

NB. For guidance in the preparation of a rescue plan see SAEMA document SDN14001

4.1 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Appropriate PPE may include:

- Safety helmet plus chin strap
- Gloves
- Safety footwear
- Hi-Vis clothing
- Safety harness etc.

4.2 Health and Safety Checking Process

- Documentation/paperwork
- Site checks
- Equipment and pre-use checks

5 Documentation/Paperwork

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

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.

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



5.1 Site checks:

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

- Implement all of the hazard control measures specified in the working risk assessment
- 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
- 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.

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

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 Scaffoldtag

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

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

- Work permits
- Access door keys or passes
- Equipment keys
- Anemometer
- Emergency procedures
- Communications device

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 can 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

NB. The list above is not exhaustive

5.2 Equipment and Pre-Use Checks

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 meters per second (15 mph)

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.

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.

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

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 the working area from alleyways, side doors etc.

Visual Inspection. Check all the equipment to be used including:

- The equipment should be complete and serviceable
- The information plates (id plates) must match the suspended access equipment inventory (also known as the equipment schedule or 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
- If the equipment is electrically powered, check the RCD's operate correctly where fitted
- Any power cables and their connections etc. should have no obvious signs of defect
- The runway and surrounding area should be clear of obstructions
- Check the platform is reasonable and free of bird droppings and other debris. If dissatisfied inform the building manager (duty holder) to allow for 'specialist cleaning' of the platform if necessary

6 Rigging Platforms

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
- Operative 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

NB. The above list is not exhaustive.

6.1 Operators Manual

In the absence of any specific information the operator's manual should be used.

7 Safe Use of Suspended Access Equipment

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. 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 personnel to be available and contactable on standby 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.

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

7.1 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 on 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 platforms initial movements.
- When manoeuvring around be constantly aware of obstructions and projections from the building façade – 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 when necessary.
- Always use any façade 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 unauthorized 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 operator’s 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 doubt refer your concerns to the Building Manager (Duty Holder).

8 Breakdowns/Malfunctions

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.

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

NB. For further guidance see SAEMA document SDN 14001

8.1 Completion of Work

On completion of 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.

Fit weatherproof covers, if available.

Apply storm brakes, where fitted.

Platforms left suspended over the sides of buildings should be adequately secured to prevent movement.



Any damage or defect should be identified and reported to the Duty Holders representative. If necessary, the equipment should be placed out of service and fitted with an appropriate '**Out of Service**' sign.

Remove tools, work equipment and rubbish from site.

To reduce the possibility of infection or spread of infectious diseases, personnel should wash their hands as soon as possible after completing the works.

8.2 Signing out Procedure

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.

Where possible the Duty Holders representative should then countersign this. At least one copy should be left with the Duty Holders representative for the site log.

Disclaimer: D2E wish to clarify that nothing contained in this document changes, modifies, supersedes or in any way seeks to make other recommendations to the information and/or regulations published by the recommended industry specialists.



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