



IRATA SAFETY BULLETIN SB 28

DROPPED OBJECTS

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1. Summary

A number of incidents have been reported to IRATA relating to dropped objects;

- *“Technician lowered a bucket with a bucket of paint in it, the bucket of paint fell out but didn’t hit anything.”*
- *“A radio located in a radio-harness slipped out and fell 25ft to the ground.”*
- *“While carrying out ultrasonic inspection, the ultrasonic set fell 30m into the sea.”*
- *“An operator de-rigging on the bridge deck dislodged a piece of ballast that ricocheted to hit a suspended operator below on the left knee causing a small bruise”*
- *“The tool bag of a technician fell to the ground when he missed clipping the karabiner to the gear loop on his harness.”*

2. Recommendations

Take your time to prepare your worksite and equipment properly before commencing any task! Only use certified bags when lifting or lowering equipment in bags! Most of these incidents could be avoided by following the recommendations in the IRATA ICOP;

1.4.1.1 The essential elements of a safe system of work include:

f) proper control of working methods, including:

- (i) provision for emergencies;
- (ii) the protection of third parties;
- (iii) the use of work equipment;
- (iv) exclusion zones.

2.2.4 Risk assessment

“...b) [consider] any hazard placing the public or other workers at risk, in particular, persons working on the ground on to which debris or tools could be dropped;...”

2.2.6 Procedures and personnel to be in place before work begins

j) protection of third parties, e.g. exclusion zones; barriers; warning signs.

2.11.8.1.1 Exclusion zones may need to be set up to protect people from falling or to protect people against falling objects from above the area of rope access operations, or anyone below.

2.11.8.2.1 Where required, precautions appropriate to the situation should be provided to prevent equipment or materials falling in such a way that other people might be endangered.

Annex M.2.2 In many cases, the greatest danger is of dropping the tools on to people below. Therefore, to guard against this, small tools such as hammers, trowels and drills should be securely attached to the rope access technician’s harness, e.g. by appropriate cords or lanyards, or to an independently suspended line. Alternatively, small items could be carried in a suitable container, e.g. a bucket or bag, securely attached to the rope access technician’s harness.”

Annex K.1.2 Pre-use equipment check

K.1.2 Before approaching the point of descent or ascent, or commencing to descend or ascend, checks should be made to ensure:

f) tools or other items are secured so they cannot fall.”