



IRATA SAFETY BULLETIN SB35 Dropped Objects

Dropped Objects

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1. Summary

Member companies continue to submit incident reports regarding dropped objects from height, see selection below. The H&S Committee would like to re-enforce the message from SB 28, highlight again, the need to treat this issue with the respect it deserves, considering the severity of consequences a dropped object can pose.

Incident 1: *Karabiner was carried open on the side of the harness, resulting in a drop of the karabiner. Nothing was hit, karabiner remained within barrier area.*

Incident 2: *the attachment point of a Makita hand drill broke (without a clear reason, no shock load), resulting in a fall of the Makita from 60m. Only the battery drill was damaged, remaining within the barricaded area.*

2. Conclusions

The responsible rope access team employing tools and equipment at height must ensure the suitability and fitness for service of the equipment. The example involving a dropped battery drill in particular shows the importance and value of exclusion zones.

3. Recommendations

- Conduct thorough pre-use checks of items/tools/equipment used at height regarding its structural integrity and suitability for use in a tethered configuration.
- For further information on exclusion zones reference ICOP 1.4.2.6 & 2.11.8 - Exclusion zones.
- For further information on tool attachment methods reference ICOP Annex M - Use of tools and other work equipment.
- Consider having larger, heavy or cumbersome tools and equipment attached to a separate hauling/lowering system **ICOP 2.11.8.2.2** *Methods of providing precautions include securing all tools to either the rope access technician or to separate lines. Normally, items weighing over eight kilograms should be attached to a separate line, while those below this weight may be secured to the worker (For more information on the use of tools and other work equipment, see Part 3, Annex M.)*



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- The above precautions and requirement for inspection and suitability also apply when using retractable lanyard style equipment/tool attachment devices.
- Rope access equipment itself can become a dropped object if not handled carefully and/or malfunctioning.
- A pre-use check consisting of a visual, tactile and function check should be carried out before each use. Operators should continue to monitor the safety of the system during use.
- Consider the use of catch nets, bags with large openings etc. when removing fragile and brittle objects or substances to prevent them from falling. In some cases overhead protection of sensitive equipment below or the coverage of thoroughfares might become essential.

Information refer to ICOP 2.7.14 – clothing and protective eg.