

FACT SHEET 14

ROPE EVACUATION FROM MECHANICAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT

Some materials handling equipment is designed to work with the operator raised to heights of more than three meters. There is a requirement to provide a safe means of escape for the operator should such equipment become stuck in the raised position.

Paragraph 280 of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER 98) Approved Code of Practice and Guidance states, in relation to the lifting of persons:

“You should ensure that in the event of failure of the lifting equipment that the persons being lifted are not exposed to danger and a reliable means of rescue is available”.

Every site and application is different. It is therefore essential that a risk assessment is conducted to meet the specific needs of the lifting operation to be performed and to determine the most appropriate means of rescue. Guidance on such risk assessment is given in the HSE Local Authority Circular (LAC) detailed below. If rope evacuation is considered appropriate as a means of escape the LAC should be read in full. It includes guidance on types of equipment to be used and the training required.

The LAC is not an official public document. It is intended to provide guidance for specialist inspectors. However it provides a useful review of all the issues involved in a single comprehensive document. It can be downloaded as a pdf from www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs . The document is LAC Number 20/3 listed under section 20 – Emergency Procedures.

It may well be that a company would be justified in writing a risk assessment that states that, in the overall scheme of things, rope evacuation training is a far greater risk than getting stranded in the air. If a decision is taken to adopt such a position then the risk assessment must still continue to a point where it makes clear how any stranded person will be rescued.

The information in this Fact Sheet has been assembled and interpreted to give truck owners and users basic guidance on frequently asked questions. Further important information will be given in the quoted reference documents. Responsibility for meeting the safety obligations discussed rests with the employer, and the FLTA will not accept liability for any problem arising as a result of the content of this document. **Technical Bulletins, containing more detailed information and updated as appropriate, are made available free to members of the FLTA SAFE USER GROUP.**

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