

BS 7985:2013

**Code of practice for the use
of rope access methods for
industrial purposes –
Recommendations and
guidance supplementary to
BS ISO 22846**

Publishing and copyright information

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 30 September 2013. It was prepared by Technical Committee PH/5, *Personal fall protection*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its secretary.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 7985:2009, which is withdrawn.

Relationship with other publications

This new edition of BS 7985 has been prepared following the publication of BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2. In the new edition of BS 7985, in general, widely applicable advice now given in BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2 has been omitted and BS 7985 just provides details to supplement the two BSI ISO standards.

This British Standard is intended to be used in conjunction with BS ISO 22846-1:2003 and BS ISO 22846-2:2012.

Information about this document

This new edition of BS 7985 incorporates only changes made necessary by the publication of BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2. It does not represent a full review or revision of the standard, which will be undertaken in due course.

It is anticipated that a future revision of BS 7883 will include updated recommendations on the use of anchor devices.

This standard, when read in conjunction with BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2, gives practical advice on the duties placed on employers, employees and self-employed people who use specialist rope access methods for work at height, and gives recommendations for good practice. The first edition of BS 7985, published in 2002, was based on the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA) *Guidelines on the use of rope access methods for industrial purposes* [1], which represented a number of years of close co-operation with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). It included contributions from the Federation of Master Steeplejacks and Lightning Conductor Engineers (since renamed the Association of Technical Lightning and Access Specialists).

The standard applies to industrial rope access work only, where the prime activity is the work itself. It is not intended to cover, for example, leisure activities or emergency evacuation systems and their procedures. Nevertheless, those engaged in other similar activities would probably benefit from the advice given in this standard, as many of the principles do apply and offer good practice. In addition to onshore work, the advice in this document is relevant to work carried out on all offshore installations where that installation is subject to the relevant sections of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

NOTE Copyright is claimed in Figure 4 and Figure 5. The copyright holder is Lyon Equipment Ltd., Unit 3-6, Clock Garage Industrial Estate, Old Tebay, Cumbria CA10 3SS, UK.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

In particular, attention is drawn to the statutory requirements listed in Clause 4.

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1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations and guidance on the use of rope access methods for work at height. It is intended for use by employers, employees and self-employed persons who use rope access methods, and those who commission rope access work, e.g. building owners and contractors, and also by national enforcement agencies and safety officers. This British Standard is applicable to the use of rope access methods for access to buildings, other structures (on or offshore) or natural features (such as cliff faces), in which the ropes are suspended from, or connected to, the structure or natural feature. It is applicable to situations where ropes are used as the primary means of access, egress or support and as the primary means of protection against a fall.

This standard is not intended to apply to the use of rope access methods for leisure activities, arboriculture, general steeplejack methods or emergency personal evacuation systems, or to the use of rope access (line rescue) techniques by the fire brigade and other emergency services for rescue work or for training.

NOTE 1 For building owners and contractors, the information and guidance given in Clause 4 and Clause 5 and in 12.1 is of particular relevance.

NOTE 2 A typical method of descending and ascending using rope access techniques is given in Annex A, an equipment inspection checklist in Annex B, a harness comfort and adjustability test in Annex C and information on the effect of wind speed and working height on available working times in Annex D. A list of useful addresses is given in Annex E.

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

BS 7883, *Code of practice for the design, selection, installation, use and maintenance of anchorage devices conforming to BS EN 795*

BS EN 136, *Respiratory protective devices – Full face masks – Requirements, testing, marking*

BS EN 140, *Respiratory protective devices – Half masks and quarter masks – Requirements, testing, marking*

BS EN 143, *Respiratory protective devices – Particle filters – Requirements, testing, marking*

BS EN 149, *Respiratory protective devices – Filtering half masks to protect against particles – Requirements, testing, marking*

BS EN 166, *Personal eye-protection – Specifications*

BS EN 352 (all parts), *Hearing protectors – Safety requirements and testing*

BS EN 355, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Energy absorbers*

BS EN 361, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Full body harnesses*

BS EN 362, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Connectors*

BS EN 374-1, *Protective gloves against chemicals and micro-organisms – Part 1: Terminology and performance requirements*

BS EN 388, *Protective gloves against mechanical risks*