


Doc. No.: GU262ENG	<h1>IRATA PRINCIPLE OF DOUBLE PROTECTION</h1>	
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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document supersedes 'Doc. No.: GU262ENG', dated 31 May 2018, which is now void.
- 1.2 Some members have sought clarification regarding the IRATA principle of double protection, and how this principle may apply to some specific items of equipment. For example, equipment designed to be used to assist with rigging such as a rigging plate.
- 1.3 The objective of this note is to summarise this fundamental principle.

## 2.0 Principle of double protection

- 2.1 At the heart of IRATA's safe system of work is the principle of double protection. The IRATA International Code of Practice (ICOP) specifies how this principle is applied. Some relevant clauses are shown below.

- 2.2 It is important to address the potential for failure and its resulting consequences:

*1.4.2.5.1 Of primary importance in the IRATA International rope access system is the principle of double protection. It is essential to include the provision of at least one additional means of protection to prevent a rope access technician falling, for example, a safety line in conjunction with the working line. This means that, should any one item fail within the suspension system, there is an adequate safety back-up to protect the user ...*

- 2.3 Whilst upholding the IRATA principle of double protection, it is also important to follow the information supplied by the manufacturer at all times.

## 3.0 Anchors and anchorages

- 3.1 The anchor system is of primary importance in the rope access system and should be unquestionably reliable. Accordingly, subject to risk assessment, a single element of a structure may have adequate strength to provide a location for both anchors:


*2.11.1.2 ...A single element of a structure, (e.g. structural steelwork), a natural geological feature or a tree might have adequate strength to provide a place for anchor points for both the working line and the safety line. This should be verified by a competent person ...*

- 3.2 It is important to note that this clause does not apply to items of equipment, e.g. a rigging plate; a rigging plate is not a "structure".

## 4.0 Harness

- 4.1 It has never been a requirement within IRATA to wear two harnesses:

*2.11.1.3 The principle of double protection also applies to the attachment of rope access technicians via their anchor line devices to the working line and safety line and to any anchors by*

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*their anchor lanyards. For example, descending devices and back-up devices should be fixed to the rope access technician's harness with separate connectors, in accordance with the information supplied by the manufacturer. (It is not necessary to wear two harnesses).*

## 5.0 Training requirements

5.1 The IRATA Training, Assessment and Certification Scheme (TACS) states in **9.6.3** that a major discrepancy (fail) includes:

*... a) only one point of safety attachment while in suspension; ...*

## 6.0 Summary

6.1 Within a rope access system it may be acceptable to utilise a single unquestionable reliable 'structure' from which to anchor. A technician may also use a single harness. Equipment used as part of the system, between these two extremities, should adhere to the principle of double protection (ICOP **1.4.2.5.1**).

6.2 Within any rope access system, the use of any single item of equipment, e.g. a rigging plate, should be backed up by an additional means of protection. Such work should be subject to the same management and supervision as any other rope access system.

6.3 The primary objective when using rope access methods is to plan, manage and carry out the work with a goal of no accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences, i.e. to ensure a safe system of work is maintained at all times, and with no damage to property or harm to the environment.