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## FALL ARREST GUIDANCE

### **Assessor guidance for the assessment of climbing with a twin (Y-shaped) fall arrest lanyard [see General Requirements section 8.6.4, and 22.5.3]**

The current IRATA syllabus includes 'climbing with a fall arrest lanyard' as one of the compulsory elements to be assessed at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

As a guide to this required part of all IRATA assessments, the following document has been prepared. This has been carried out at the request of the IRATA Training Committee, there being a general consensus that some definitive guidance as to the allocation of minor and major discrepancies was required.

The aim of this document is to guide the assessor and to help maintain a regulated and consistent approach to this element. The assessor is responsible for the final decision on the day, and may use this guidance to arrive at that decision. The assessment must follow section 22.5.3 of the General Requirements.

This is not a training document for either candidate or assessor. Both parties must obtain appropriate, suitable and sufficient training in this topic before attending an assessment. An assessor's workshop attendance may not be sufficient. It is appropriate for the assessor to have an understanding of the uses and limitations of all equipment in use. **A Copy of the product instructions for the equipment being used must be available and read as per 22.1.6 c of the General Requirements.**

When used in conjunction with forthcoming guidance from the IRATA Training Committee concerning training provision, it may also be found that other similar items of concern need to be considered, e.g. climbing with cow's tails and descent rescue.

The table below consists of three columns. The left hand column gives points to note during visual and oral assessment of the candidate's knowledge of climbing with a Y-shaped fall arrest lanyard. These points have all been covered during an assessor workshop, and should all be covered during IRATA training. Many of the points are fundamental to the safe use of other rope access techniques, acting here as reminders for this part of the assessment.

The second and third columns give examples of the type of error required to gain either a minor discrepancy (three constitute a fail) or a major discrepancy (one constitutes a fail), respectively. These are examples and, of course, there may be other possible discrepancies.

At first view, it may seem to be a severely assessed element of the syllabus, but as many will be aware, the use of fall arrest techniques is less effective at preventing or avoiding falls than work positioning techniques. Consequently, simple, yet fundamental, mistakes or misunderstandings made while using a fall arrest system can lead to a potentially hazardous situation. Candidates and assessors must be quite clear that rope access systems and fall arrest systems are different fall protection systems. In a fall arrest system, the hands and feet provide the primary support system, with the back-up system (i.e. the fall arrest system) being provided by a full body harness worn by the user which is connected via an energy absorbing lanyard to a reliable anchor.

As with all other sections, a candidate may fail their assessment by failing this element of the assessment.

**Assessor guidance for the assessment of climbing with a twin fall arrest lanyard** [see General Requirements section 8.4.4, and 22.5.3]

Fall Arrest Lanyards	Minor	Major
Selection of appropriate harness (full body or combination to EN361)		(e.g. separate sit and chest, non – EN361)
Selection of appropriate lanyards e.g. length, EN Standard, twin (Y-shape)		Two singles used in place of twin (Y-shaped).
Appropriate attachment point to harness – Normally a sternal (chest) attachment is expected. A dorsal attachment is acceptable in countries where a sternal attachment is illegal, but is not ideal for the syllabus requirement. The attachment point is fundamental to a fall arrest system, which is a different system from a rope access system.		Lateral (side), or ventral (front waist-high) point used.
Selection of appropriate anchor points whilst climbing. <b>Assessor Note:</b> Although the selection of reliable anchors is fundamental to all rope access, anchors are often poorly chosen during fall arrest climbing. Connectors dynamically cross-loaded are at high risk of failure.		Inappropriate anchor relied upon entirely (e.g. questionable reliability, cross-loaded connector).
Clipping of unused leg of twin (Y-shaped) lanyard. <b>Assessor Note:</b> Be aware of designated 'breakaway /parking points' and ask the candidate to explain their correct use if present and in use on their harness.		Clipping to hard point on harness (gear loop, attachment point or structural webbing) whilst using lanyard.
Clearance distance		If insufficient for Fall Factor, lanyard length and absorber deployment distance
Increased Fall Factor (clipping, diagonals, verticals)		If >FF2 (e.g. Fall Arrest lanyard travels up a vertical or diagonal element).
Use of work positioning systems with Fall Arrest lanyards.	Loading Fall Arrest lanyards whilst using a slack work positioning system.	Replying on a single (slack or loaded) work positioning system and removing Fall Arrest lanyards.
Choking of Fall Arrest lanyards on structural elements. <b>Assessor Note:</b> Be aware of Fall arrest lanyards and connectors designed specifically for this purpose. Ask candidate to explain hazards.		Clipping connector back to lanyard leg. Passing connector around structure and clipping back to harness. (Bypassing energy absorber).
Extension of fall arrest lanyards.	Anchor sling length increasing fall distance unnecessarily.	Climbing above anchor slings, effectively increasing the lanyard length over the manufacturer's recommendation.
<b>Mobile Fall Arresters used as Back-up devices: Notes for assessors. This is not a section of the fall arrest element of the assessment. However, a candidate may well be using such a device as their back-up during rope manoeuvres, rescue and hauling.</b>		
Selection of appropriate device (type, EN Standard).	e.g. compatibility with method of use and equipment. (Rope)	
Selection of appropriate device for the task.	e.g. vertical ladder climb or wide rope to rope.	
Correct use of the device. <b>Assessor Note:</b> Assessor requires knowledge of methods of use of particular device, and must have appropriate use instructions available.	e.g. no pre-use check. e.g. use of device inverted, unsuitable lanyard to device, manually towing, overriding or moving 'hands free' devices. <b>Many types of misuse exist.</b>	
Appropriate attachment point to harness (Sternal or Dorsal)	Beware attachment points <b>other than</b> Sternal or Dorsal being used during the exercise.	
Appropriate anchor system chosen and used. (Low stretch rope, termination).	Pre-use check of fixed rope and anchor before use. Unsuitable rope (e.g. dynamic) or termination (e.g. Bowline as opposed to manufacturer's appropriate knot or sewn termination)	

**All user instructions must be available**