



BUILDINGS BULLETIN 2011-014

Technical

Supersedes: None

Issuer: Thomas Fariello, RA
Acting First Deputy Commissioner

Issuance Date: May 26, 2011

Purpose: This document clarifies the requirements that govern the installation or modification of cell phone equipment using industrial rope access (also known as controlled descent) methods.

Related Code/Zoning Section(s):

AC	28-404
1 RCNY	9-01

Subject(s): Cell phone equipment, industrial rope access; controlled descent; cell phone tower; cell phone antenna; cell phone equipment; rigging; licensed rigger; rigging foreman; specialty crew

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- Definition:** Industrial rope access (also known as controlled descent) is the use of rope access equipment where:
 - Ropes are used as the primary means of support;
 - Ropes are used as a means of protection or positioning; and
 - A person descends or ascends on a rope, or traverses along a rope.
 - Licensee:** Section 28-404 of the New York City Administrative Code requires the hoisting and/or lowering of articles on the outside of a building to be performed or supervised by a licensed rigger. As industrial rope access consists of the hoisting and/or lowering of people on the outside of a building, it must be performed and/or supervised by a licensed rigger.
 - Foreman:** In lieu of providing active jobsite supervision, a licensed rigger may designate a foreman in accordance with subdivision (d) of 1 RCNY 9-01 to provide jobsite supervision. The foreman must be an employee of the licensed rigger; or an employee of a partnership, corporation, or other business association of which the licensee is an officer of the company, with responsibility for financial matters, hiring of employees, and oversight of work performance. The foreman must also possess a valid "Certificate of License Record" (tear-off).
 - Crew:** In accordance with subdivision (f) of 1 RCNY 9-01, individuals installing and using industrial rope access equipment must either be:
 - Employees on the payroll of the licensee supervising the operation; or
 - Employees of the partnership, corporation, or other business association of which the licensee is an officer of the company, with responsibility for financial matters, hiring of employees, and oversight of work performance.

5. **Specialty Crew:** In lieu of item 4 above, where work is best handled by or requires crews of a specialty trade and the licensee wishes to assume responsibility for individuals who are not his or her employees, or employees of a business in which the licensee is not an officer, the licensee may apply to the department for a specialty crew waiver in accordance with subdivision (g) of 1 RCNY 9-01. The request must be in the form of a letter on the letterhead of the licensee or partnership, corporation, or other business association for which the rigger uses his or her license, and signed by the licensee. The letter must contain:
 - (a) The name(s) and employer(s) of the individual(s) who will comprise the specialty crew;
 - (b) Contact information of the employer(s);
 - (c) Qualifications of the individual(s), including experience and certifications relevant to industrial rope access;
 - (d) Address of the jobsite; and
 - (e) Anticipated date(s) of work.
6. **Certification:** Any person using industrial rope access methods to descend or ascend outside a building, including the individual supervising such, must be certified by, either, the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians ("SPRAT") or the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association ("IRATA"), or an equivalent acceptable to the department.
7. **Planning:** In accordance with subdivisions (c) and (g) of 1 RCNY 9-01, the licensed rigger must personally plan the equipment setup and operation, or where a specialty crew is utilized, be an active participant of the planning team.
8. **Permit:** Prior to industrial rope access equipment setup or operation, a permit is required from the department. The permit must either be:
 - (a) An alteration permit for the installation or modification of the cell phone equipment permit (see Technical Policy Procedure Notice #5/98 for more information), provided that plans for the industrial rope access equipment setup and operation are filed with the alteration permit for the cell phone equipment work, either as part of the original application or as an amendment to the permit application; or
 - (b) An approved CD-5 for the industrial rope access equipment setup and operation.
9. **Plans:** Plans for the industrial rope access filed in accordance with item 8 above must be prepared, signed, and sealed by a licensed professional engineer, or prepared and signed by a licensed rigger. The person preparing the plans must visit the site prior to the submittal of the plans to confirm site conditions and to ensure the plans reflect the site conditions. The plans must include:
 - (a) All details necessary to ensure the safe installation and use or modification of the industrial rope access equipment;
 - (b) Details of the façade of the building where work is being performed, and a note describing the condition of the façade and any special precautions needed to safeguard the façade. Where the building requires periodic façade inspections in accordance with Local Law 11 of 1998 (Section 28-302 of the New York City Administrative Code), the note must indicate if the façade was deemed safe, safe with a repair and maintenance program, or unsafe during the last façade inspection cycle. The note must also indicate if any current façade repair or maintenance work is taking place on the building and if there are any outstanding façade violations or complaints for to the building; and
 - (c) If the work is taking place over an area accessible to the public, a note indicating steps to be taken to protect the public in accordance with item 11 below.
10. **Inspection:** Prior to the commencement of work, the licensed rigger or rigging foreman must inspect the industrial rope access equipment and its anchorage points to ensure that they are in accordance with plan, and are safe and secure.
11. **Public Protection:** Where industrial rope access occurs over an area that remains open to the public, such as sidewalks, walkways, yards, courtyards, building entrances, balconies, and roof decks, such areas must be closed to the public or protected with a sidewalk shed, in accordance with Section 3307 of the New

York City Building Code, during the course of the industrial rope access operation. Full or partial sidewalk closures require a permit from the New York City Department of Transportation.

12. **Tools:** Only hand tools, securely attached to a person, may be carried by such person during the use of industrial rope access methods. Any other tools or equipment must be separately hoisted or lowered.