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Indoor rock climbing fall

13 October 2021

A 28-year-old member of the public suffered fatal injuries after falling approximately 13 metres at a Sydney indoor climbing gym. The climber was ascending the climbing wall alone using an auto-belay device at the time of the incident.



Location of the incident



Unit involved in the incident

Safety information

Implement 'reasonably practicable' control measures to manage the risks associated with the use of rock-climbing equipment such as ropes, pulleys, karabiners, quickdraws, anchorages, belay devices and auto-belay devices, including:

- installing the equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- undertaking inspections, maintenance and if necessary, testing, of all equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommended intervals and methods, or where this is not available, in accordance with the recommendations of a competent person

The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing and the findings are not yet confirmed. SafeWork NSW has commenced an investigation in response to the incident to determine its cause and circumstances. No conclusions should be drawn from the information in this publication about the cause of the incident or the culpability of any party.

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- Providing the necessary information, training, instruction and supervision to those that use the equipment.

A systematic inspection, testing and maintenance plan should be developed at the time of commissioning and then implemented for all equipment. The plan should include the following inspections:

Inspection type	Interval	Typical actions
Commissioning	Post installation and prior to use	Check the installation has been undertaken in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and industry guidance. Proof test as required by the manufacturer and/or industry guidance.
Pre-operational (routine visual inspections)	Daily	Visual inspection and functional verification. Check all equipment for obvious signs of damage, excessive wear, changes in configuration etc. Check everything is working as designed.
Routine (operational)	Every 1-3 months, depending on use	Review logbook entries, make necessary adjustments, assess anchor points and fixings etc.
Periodic (comprehensive)	At least every 12 months	Thorough testing and inspection of safety critical components, which may require disassembly of equipment. Assess the condition of items against the recommended acceptance/rejection criteria and obtain a quantitative measurement where relevant. Note: Inspections should be undertaken by competent persons not involved in the day-to-day operations of the facility.

Note: references to inspection types in parenthesis are consistent with AS 2316.1.1:2021.

Inspection plans may need to be reviewed to include more detailed inspections following long periods of inactivity, e.g. closures due to COVID-19.

Records of inspections should be kept and include the following information:

- dates the equipment was manufactured, purchased and put into service
- the condition of the equipment when put into service
- inspection date(s)

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- inspection details including type, method, results and notes
- condition of equipment on inspection
- recommendations and/or actions taken (if any required) after inspection
- name and signature of inspector
- reason why any piece of equipment was removed from use
- criteria for retirement and projected expiry date.

More information

- [WHS Regulation 2017](#) - Clause 213 Maintenance and inspection of plant
- [Managing the risks of plant in the workplace](#) (Code of Practice)
- [Managing the risk of falls at the workplace](#) (Code of Practice)
- [Guide to Inspecting and Maintaining plant](#)
- AS 2316.1.1:2021 Artificial climbing structures and challenge courses - safety requirements and test methods for belayed climbing and abseiling structures