



TECHNICAL BULLETIN

Subject: Inspection of Lowerable Structures

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Who Should Read this: Maintenance Management Organisations, Prime Contractors, Private Finance Initiatives, Public Private Partnership and other contracts, Project Managers, Infrastructure Management Teams and Managers with responsibility for MOD projects and Property Management Works Services.

This Technical Bulletin does not necessarily cover all aspects of the subject matter and readers should make themselves aware of other potential issues. Readers should also not rely on DIO Publications as their only means of becoming aware of safety issues, but they should consult widely across other media to maintain awareness.

When it takes effect: immediately

When it is due to expire: When updated or rescinded.

Aim

1. To bring to the attention of appropriate persons incidents of falling equipment from lowerable structures and masts and to reinforce the requirement for thorough inspections as detailed in DIO PG 10/08.

Introduction

2. Compliance with the contents of this Technical Bulletin will enable compliance with the Health & Safety At Work etc Act 1974 and its subordinate Regulations.
3. The appropriate MOD officer shall arrange for the Maintenance Management Organisation (MMO) contractor to carry out all actions in accordance with this Bulletin.
4. Any work required as a result of this Technical Bulletin must be carried out in accordance with JSP375 – Management of Health & Safety in Defence.
5. On MOD Establishments occupied by United States Visiting Forces (USVF) responsibility is jointly held by USVF and DIO(USF). At base level this jointly managed organisation is to take appropriate action to implement the contents of this Bulletin. Where this Bulletin contains procedures which differ significantly from USVF practice, DIO (USF) code of practice will be issued.

Requirement

6. The inspection of a lowerable structure (eg. Abacus mast or windsock structure):
 - (a) Is to be undertaken at least every 12 months, in accordance with DIO PG10/08 and the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER).
 - (b) Should be planned to coincide with the manufacturer's recommended maintenance requirements (typically annually).
 - (c) Requires the mast or structure to be lowered so that the inspection is done at ground level and to enable checking the operation of the lowering mechanism. The inspection is not to be solely carried out from a Mobile Elevated Platform or by using binoculars from ground level, as this would not to allow a proper inspection of the structure, its fittings and its operation.**
 - (d) Includes the manufacturer's recommendations as a minimum for any proprietary manufactured masts or other elements.
 - (e) Includes checking the lowering mechanism and hinge components for correct operation.
 - (f) Requires the checking of fixings for any equipment attached to the structure, including the tightness of fittings such as lamp covers to obstruction warning lights, antenna fixings and any moving parts such as shackle mechanisms to wind-socks.
 - (g) Is to ensure that all elements are thoroughly examined for signs of corrosion, damage or mechanical wear, including that of fixing or holding down bolts and other connections including welds.
 - (h) Includes the production of a R8 certificate, and R9 certificate if any repairs are required.
7. The operation and maintenance of lowerable structures and masts need to satisfy the requirements of the Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER). The task is included in the DIO "Hard FM Standards & Tasks" schedule.
8. Any work incurring expenditure of MOD funding requires appropriate authority from the MOD officer responsible for the particular establishment.

Background

9. Some inspections of lowerable masts have been undertaken without lowering the structure, sometimes using a Mobile Elevated Platform or by the use of binoculars from ground level.
10. This method of “inspection” does not check the operation or soundness of the lowering mechanism, nor does it meet the requirements of the PG.
11. One location where the masts were not lowered nor equipment closely inspected had obstruction warning lights fitted to the top of the masts. Some covers to these lamps subsequently worked loose due to wind vibration and fell to ground presenting a serious risk to personnel and operations.
12. In addition and subsequent to SA 10/13, it has also come to light that some windsock fittings are still not being inspected as required.
13. The principle of having a lowerable structure is to allow inspection, maintenance and other work on the structure to be done at ground level without the need to climb, thereby addressing the first key principle of the Work at Height Regulations – “to avoid working at height in the first place”. To not inspect as required by PG 10/08 could be considered a breach of the LOLER regulations.