

2008 Monthly ES&H Campaign: April

Controlled Descent

Monday, 7th

What is a Controlled Descent?

Simply stated, a controlled descent is anytime a climber is suspended solely by rope systems. It is a commonly used method of accessing equipment in the telecommunications industry, especially in urban areas where antennas and coax are frequently mounted to the sides of buildings. Prior written approval from Bechtel ES&H is required to perform any controlled descent. This approval can be requested by utilizing the Controlled Descent Plan (CDP) found as an attachment in the Subcontractor ES&H Program.

Why use a Controlled Descent?

In cases where it is not feasible to use a manlift or crane and manbasket to access the equipment, a controlled descent may be used (with advance approval from ES&H). Performing a controlled descent provides an advantage when other access methods cannot be used, but presents its own unique hazards that must be addressed.

Who is involved?

The following individuals are required to participate in the CDP process:

- Bechtel Field Coordinator
- Subcontractor's Competent Person (Competent Tower Climber Supervisor)
- Subcontractor personnel performing the controlled descent
- Bechtel ES&H Representative (*approver*)

The Subcontractor personnel performing the descent must be experienced, adequately trained (see section 5.16 of the Subcontractor ES&H Program for more details) and possess the correct equipment for the task.

Did You Know?

The controlled descent program was developed to review rope access work due to the high hazards typically encountered. It is important to remember that a contractor cannot perform controlled descents prior to approval from a Bechtel ES&H Representative. Violations of the CDP process carry the same consequences as that of Free Climbing!

When should a plan be developed?

A plan can be developed at any stage of the work process. However, due to the approval process for a controlled descent plan, the Bechtel Field Coordinator and Subcontractor should discuss these access issues during the planning stages. The sooner the plan is submitted the better chance we have for successful and on-time work performance. *All plans must be submitted a minimum of 24 hours in advance of the planned work.*

What must be submitted with a CDP?

- Controlled Descent Plan form (attachment 5-23 of the Subcontractor ES&H Program)
- A legible, scanned copy of the Competent Tower Climber cards for all workers that are named on the CDP form.
- A current rope log containing information on each rope to be used in the controlled descent, including the rescue rope that will be a part of the on-site rescue kit.
- Photos of the following: anchor points, rope re-directs, drop zones and barricade requirements or special areas of concern.
- Drawing/sketch showing the details of the controlled descent (e.g., anchor points, rope redirects, rope drops, etc.).

Resources

- [Subcontractor ES&H Program](#)

Visit the Communications ES&H website for more information.