



Rope Access training teaches attendees to apply safe concepts, defy gravity



As a standard procedure, Rope Access Team members discuss preliminary details prior to their descent to ensure all members understand what activities will occur. In the two scenes above Rope Team member Corey Dickson is reviewing information with Elizabeth Higgins and Corey Gumbert.

For three days in late April, Corey Dickson of the Lower Colorado Region Rope Access Team and Hoover Dam Police Lieutenant Kevin Lister instructed and shared their knowledge with a group of trainees about the specialized skill of rappelling.

Conducted at Hoover Dam, the Hoover Dam Police Department-sponsored training, at which Dickson was

invited to instruct with Lister, was designed to meet the training needs of Hoover Dam Police Department Chief Mary Hinson and Officer Corey Gumbert, and Hoover Dam Fire Brigade member Elizabeth Higgins.

Rope access is often the best and safest procedure to reach areas that are normally inaccessible in order to conduct inspections. Consequently, this type of training and work meshes nicely with access assignments the trainees may have and the definition of rope access work, according to the Society of Professional Rope Access Technicians (SPRAT), “. . . the use of ropes and specialized hardware as the primary means of access and support for workers. Rope access technicians descend, ascend and traverse ropes for access and work while suspended by harness or a work seat.”



Prior to beginning a descent, Corey Dickson, Elizabeth Higgins and Corey Gumbert conduct a final gear inspection. Team member safety is always paramount.



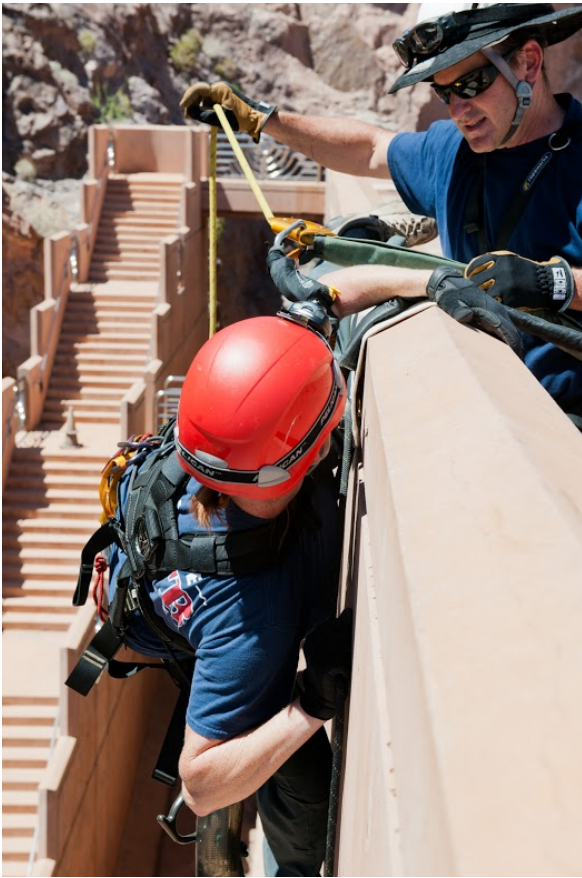
“Rope access provides a safe method of working at height or in confined spaces where ropes and associated equipment are used to gain access to and from the workplace and to be supported there,” SPRAT also states. “The advantage of using such methods primarily lies in the safety and speed with which workers can get to or from difficult locations and then carry out their work, often with minimal impact on other operations.”

Typical constraints that determine if an employee can participate with the team include the employee’s availability to volunteer for rope work while continuing to perform core job functions.

Personnel must be physically fit and pass medical fitness tests. Logically, they must be comfortable with working at height.

Members must also comply with the Reclamation Rope Access Guidelines, formally published in 2004, which require a minimum of 32 hours of training per year.

As Corey Dickson descends, fellow instructor Lt. Kevin Lister and the students watch as Dickson explains his procedures and techniques during his descent.



ABOVE — As she completes her controlled roll over the ledge with the help of Lt. Kevin Lister, Elizabeth Higgins exudes absolute concentration on procedure and technique as her descent begins. BELOW — Police Chief Mary Hinson makes her descent. It is obvious that she is applying the safety concept that rope access is all about controlled actions.





Although Rope Access Team members descend singularly, they never do so alone. Here Elizabeth Higgins watches carefully as Lt. Kevin Lister makes his descent slowly down the side of the Hoover Dam parking garage.

LCR photos by Alex Stephens