



Stefan Bright,
IWCA Safety Director

IWCA: A Historical Perspective

Knowing the IWCA's past can help you appreciate our association today



International Window Cleaning Association

I didn't start working in the window-cleaning industry until eight years into my professional business career. As a result, I didn't have the opportunity to be involved in the formation of the International Window Cleaning Association (IWCA) in 1989. Since those early days, the IWCA has continually worked to educate window cleaners, building owners, building managers and regulatory agencies toward creating and maintaining safer workplaces in the window-cleaning industry.

When I did finally join this profession, I was fortunate enough to be hired by Valcourt Building Services (McLean, Va.). Its partners, Jeff Valcourt and Jon Capon, were intimately involved in IWCA's history, and they have shared details of it with me over the years. But there's a big difference between hearing about our history and being a part of it.

During a conversation a couple of years ago with Noa Pederson, a current IWCA board of director member, he suggested we should document our association's history. Noa believed others would have a better appreciation for how hard our past presidents, board members and many others have worked to create and develop the IWCA if they understood its past. Following up on that talk with Noa, I recently asked Safety Director Stefan Bright to write about the creation of the IWCA and the ANSI/IWCA I-14 Window-Cleaning Safety Standard—a document that has become infinitely influential on our industry.

Stefan's article appears on the following pages. Please take the time to read about your association's creation and development. It brought to me a higher level of appreciation for our organization, the people involved and the position of president that I fill today.

Dan Dvorak
IWCA President

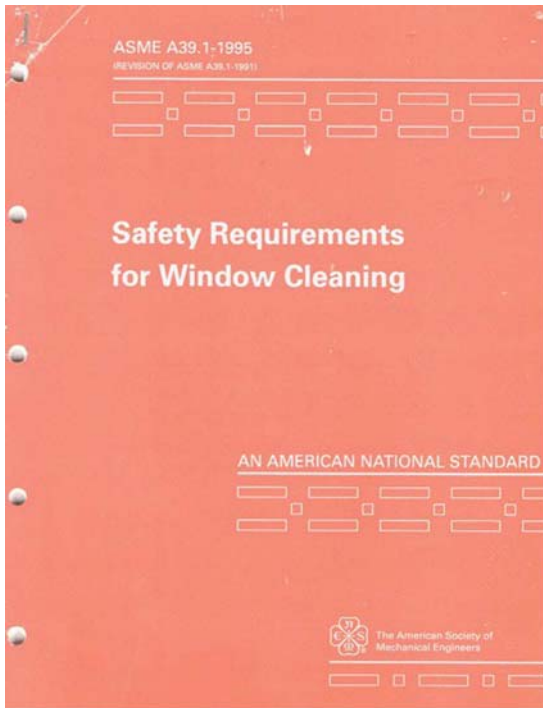
Rope Descent Systems (RDS) were introduced to the window cleaning industry in the late 1950's and early 1960's. They were not intended to be a replacement for suspended scaffolding, just another tool that could be used by a window cleaning contractor.

Through the 1970's and 1980's many companies in the window cleaning industry were uncomfortable to use RDS because there was no OSHA regulations or ANSI Standards for its use, and therefore considered illegal.

There was an American National Standard for window cleaning. It was known as the A-39.1 Safety Requirements for Window Cleaning standard and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) was the secretariat.

This ANSI Standard was first created and published in 1933.

In the late 1980's, the 1987 version of the A-39 standard underwent a public review as required by ANSI. There was a section in this standard



which addressed RDS. It was one sentence, numbered 11.3 and it stated, "The use of emergency descent equipment (equipment which is operational in the down direction only) is prohibited for window cleaning."

Much like present times, some window cleaners were promoting the ANSI A-39 standard for window cleaning safety because OSHA had no regulations for RDS. So those people communicated their interpretation of the standards for safety at that time.

During this time, there were less than a handful of window cleaning companies represented on the A-39 committee.

When the A-39 went out for public review, several companies in the US became aware of section 11.3 and were concerned. A few owners of these companies applied

for membership to this committee in an effort to see and hear why this equipment was prohibited and what could be done about removing the RDS prohibition.

In 1989, a small segment of the window cleaning industry learned that the A-39 committee was going to petition OSHA in an attempt to convince them that their standard should be adopted and used to regulate and enforce window cleaning safety.

During the same year about 60 window cleaning companies from all over the US and Canada converged upon a little town, Lubbock, Texas for the first ever national assembly of window cleaners.



At this conference, the topic of uniting our industry to develop a

consistent message with regards to safety and training was the prime topic. Additionally, it was mentioned that OSHA was going to hold a Federal Register public hearing in 1990 in an effort to discern and understand this rope descending equipment.

At the time, OSHA and the industry were calling it controlled descent equipment (CDE). This term was later abandoned and RDS used because CDE was too similar to a patented brand name of an existing system.

Because this was the first ever national networking event, window cleaners were enlightened to find out that colleagues across the country were dealing with identical issues on a daily basis. They also discovered that using RDS was extremely popular and confusing at times because of the lack of OSHA regulations and ANSI standards.

American Challenge Cup





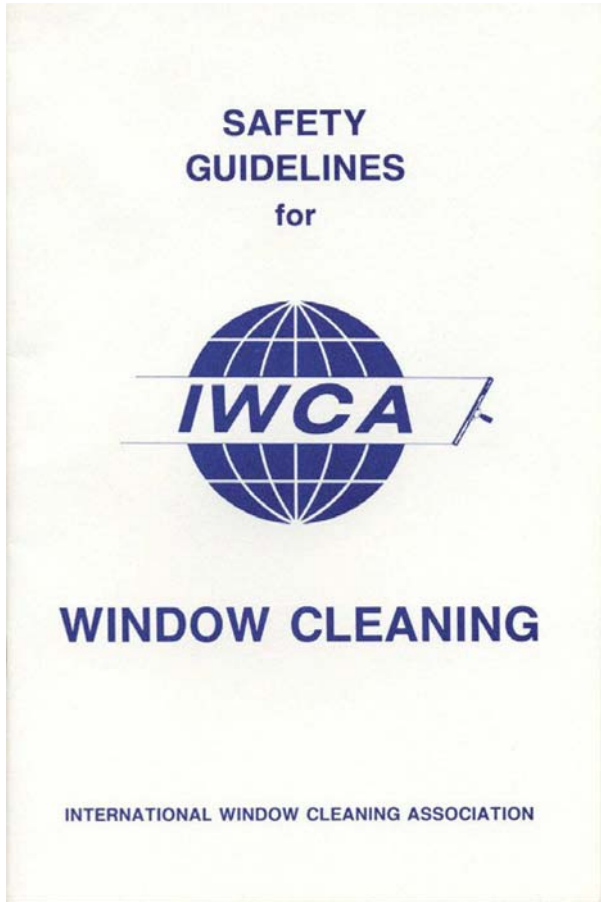
1st Prize	\$1,000
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3rd Prize	\$250

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At the conclusion of the Lubbock conference, the companies in attendance decided they would fully support the development and promotion of a trade association devoted specifically to the occupation of window cleaning and that the objective of this organization would be to increase and maintain a high level of safety for the industry and promote and improve its professionalism. The name International Window Cleaning Association was selected and the corporation was formed shortly thereafter in Chicago, IL. The first president and executive director was Jacqueline Kopp.

A board of directors was formed and the association was underway.

One of the first actions of this young organization was to inform window cleaning companies across the country that OSHA was holding a public hearing in January, 1990 and the purpose was to gather input on the usability of the use of RDS for window cleaning.

Over 70 members of the window cleaning industry attended this hearing in Washington, DC.... coincidentally, it was held at the same location and in the same room where the OSHA hearing in 2010 was held.

Some of the members of this newly founded IWCA who attended this hearing and provided testimony were: Jackie Kopp, Carl Pedersen, Jeffrey Valcourt, Jon Capon, Jack Fitch, Marc Lebel, LaRue Coleman and the youngest speaker was a window cleaner named Stefan Bright. The IWCA had even hired a professional lobbyist to assist with their testimony.

Also in attendance were many members of the A-39 committee, manufacturers of powered platforms and members of window cleaners unions from several states.

For nearly a week, OSHA heard testimonies from all parties on the issue of RDS use for window cleaning. Many said how dangerous they felt it was and that it should be prohibited in accordance with the ANSI A-39 standard and contrarily, many stated how their companies were using RDS equipment safely. They recommended that OSHA should not prohibit the equipment but rather come up with regulations that would govern its use

Shortly after, the IWCA held its first annual convention as an association in Orlando, Florida. Carl Pedersen was elected president. Jeff Valcourt was president-elect, Herb Hirzel-treasurer and Chuck Dedden was secretary, later on replaced by Jon Capon..

The mood during the convention was filled with excitement and the core group from the Lubbock gathering was there with about 80 or more new companies in attendance. The buzz at the time was that window cleaners felt they scored a victory with OSHA at the recent hearing. And they did. Window cleaning history was made a year later with the publication of the 1991 Memorandum from Patricia Clarke and a whole new era was born unto the window cleaning industry. Users of RDS finally had regulations to follow so the equipment became legal in the US and IWCA safety and training programs were born. We have select individuals to thank for this great victory, as our industry was dangerously close to having RDS banned for us.

It was also this year that Stefan Bright was elected to the board and assigned the task of chairing the IWCA safety and training committee. The committee had 6 window cleaning company owners on it, a professional engineer and a supplier of rope access equipment.

A year later in 1992, this committee completed its first project and the IWCA produced its first safety publication entitled "Safety Guidelines for Window Cleaning". This booklet addressed the safe use of 7 pieces of window cleaning access equipment as well as duties of the employer and miscellaneous window cleaning safety.

Much of the language from this booklet is still in use today.

In 1993, the OSHA Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training recognized that window cleaning was a highly skilled occupation and they recommended that people in this trade receive a significant amount of training prior to operating any access equipment.

At the IWCA convention that year, a training specialist from Ontario, Rick Koster, gave a 5 hour safety presentation to all attendees. This was the catalyst for the IWCA to develop bigger and better safety training for their members.

The A-39 committee saw that the IWCA was growing stronger and was passionate about RDS equipment and its use. The A-39 committee knew the majority of the window cleaners in the industry

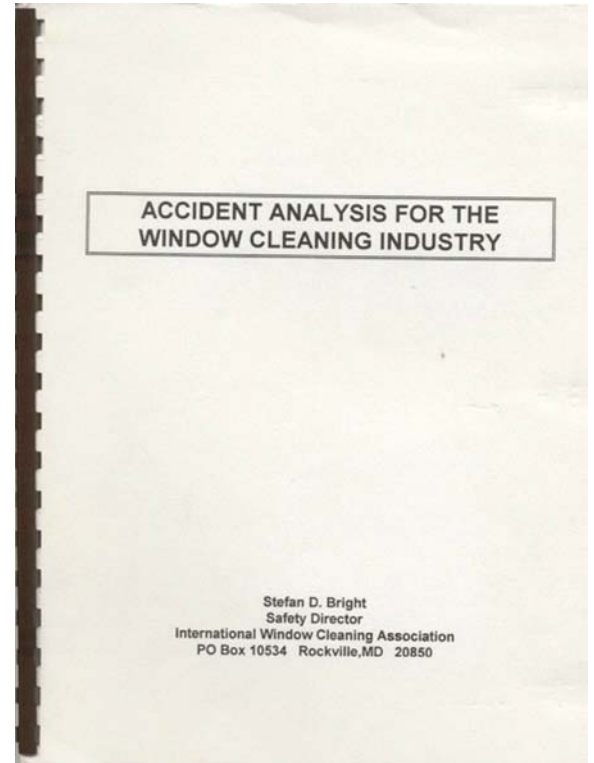
were beginning to ignore the A-39 safety standard because it prohibited RDS while OSHA and the IWCA felt the equipment was safe to use.

They formed a task group to try and write a section for RDS with the thought that if the A-39 addressed it, the IWCA and window cleaners may not ignore the standard anymore.

The IWCA held its annual convention in Reno, NV in 1994. At that convention the first ever IWCA safety and training program was presented. Over 200 people attended and each received a copy of the IWCA Safety Guidelines for Window Cleaning. It was a great success.

In the summer of 1994, the A-39 committee developed and approved an extremely restrictive draft section for the use of RDS. The height limitation was set at 75 feet and most of the other guidelines were overly restrictive, and would have rendered RDS relatively useless.

Disagreeing completely with this effort, the IWCA instituted a letter writing campaign and over 40 objections were sent in and filed with the A-39 committee. This blocked the new language from being published.



Because the A-39 saw that the IWCA was serious and paying very close attention, they asked for the IWCA's input to develop language which everyone might agree upon. In 1995, the IWCA surveyed its membership to gather a collective and unified opinion on the use of RDS equipment. In addition, the Safety Director completed a 3 year project which enabled the IWCA to publish the "Accident Analysis for Window Cleaning" which became a valuable resource for substantiating the IWCA's positions.

From 1996 through 1997, the IWCA continued its safety training efforts with significant growth in membership and increased attendance for our conventions and meetings.

At this time, the A-39 committee formed a new task group to again attempt to write language for

RDS. This time around, there were more window cleaners on the task group who utilized the safety publications the IWCA had created to draft recommendations to the A-39 Committee as a whole. This small group called themselves the “Reality Committee”.

The Reality Committee came up with a well thought out list of guidelines for RDS use. They suspected the A-39 committee would likely not acknowledge the draft without a height restriction, so they recommended 300 feet. This height harmonized the standards already published for transportable swing stage equipment.

Some window cleaners felt differently and decided to file an appeal against the A-39 committee. The nature of the objection was that they felt the A-39 would likely not accept the use of RDS by the window cleaning industry, and even if they did, they would likely limit its use.

As a result of the appeal filed, the A-39 committee secretariat (ASME) suggested that the committee attempt to resolve the objection by approving some language on RDS use. They insisted that even one sentence would be fine, such as, “Users of RDS should have a separate and independent safety line”.

Ultimately, they too were suggesting that something was better than nothing.

The A-39 responded to ASME by forming a task group which

would work on language that would address RDS use, ASME gave the committee 6 months to approve something.

The A-39 committee could not agree on publishing just one sentence as suggested by their secretariat. They felt that publishing only one sentence would be against the very nature and scope of the standard because RDS or any piece of equipment needed more than one sentence to be standardized safely. The Committee was unable to agree

The IWCA board recognized that a national safety standard was needed to substantiate and professionalize the work and publications of the IWCA.

upon the entire body of work by the sub-committee. After 6 months of debate, the A-39 Committee still could not generate a consensus; therefore, not even one sentence was published. As a result, the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) disbanded the A-39 committee and withdrew its standard.

It was September, 1998 and the window cleaning industry was left without a safety standard. This was a tragedy, but also an opportunity.

At this point in time, the IWCA had already delivered a safety training program to over 2,500 window cleaners and had sold over 4000 copies of the IWCA Safety Guidelines for Window Cleaning.

Because OSHA had recognized window cleaning as a highly skilled occupation, the IWCA Board of Directors had already begun discussing the development of a certification or licensing program a year earlier.

The IWCA board recognized that a national safety standard was needed to substantiate and professionalize the work and publications of the IWCA. It was decided that the IWCA would form its own internal safety committee and write its own safety standard for window cleaning and then publish and promote it as the IWCA G.I.S.S. for General Industry Safety Standard.

The IWCA Safety Committee was formed and began the work on the development of the document.

The committee was comprised of the following members, all which were approved by the board of directors;

1. Stefan Bright
2. Craig Caulkins, PE
3. Brian Crossland
4. Ty Eubanks
5. Roy Hereth
6. Andy Kreidenweiss
7. Marc Lebel
8. Theresa Martin
9. Tom McGrath

10. Carl Pedersen
11. Rick Scott
12. Tom Trinen
13. Jim Willingham
14. Bob Zeolla

There were fourteen members of the committee. Three were safety consultants, one was a licensed professional engineer, one was a manufacturer and one was a representative of the Illinois Association of Building Maintenance Contractors. The remaining nine were all window cleaning company owners or managers.

Some IWCA board members were concerned that this was a safety document written by a majority of window cleaners and would be viewed self serving and not have any validity as a result. Some felt if the IWCA heavily promoted it, it would take on a life of its own and become accepted by the industry.

Others noted that the GISS may need to understand and accept that RDS was going to be the main topic, as it still was not fully addressed by OSHA. In doing so, the concern that Californians didn't use RDS over 130 feet and New Yorkers didn't use RDS over 75, became a serious concern.

Ultimately, it was agreed by the committee and the Board of Directors that if this document would ever be taken seriously, a height limitation would need to be included.

The committee unanimously agreed to limit the height for use

of all transportable suspended equipment. This was done so that all parties would know the IWCA was equally concerned about safety for window cleaners who use all access equipment.. Also, the clause for allowing RDS to exceed 300 feet if the windows cannot be safely accessed by other means was added.

Upon reaching this agreement, the IWCA was ready to publish its own general industry safety standard. A committee member mentioned that these kinds of standards are usually numbered in some way for easy reference.

The committee agreed to take the "I" from IWCA and the 14 members of the committee and call it the I-14.1 General Industry Safety Standard. Then someone on the committee had the intelligent idea to apply to ANSI to see if this document could become an American National Standard.

The IWCA applied for accreditation for the committee in 1998, they were approved in 1999 and held their first meeting as an accredited standards committee in July, 1999.

This was the next milestone for the window cleaning industry and for the IWCA. Years and years of blood, sweat and tears went into producing this draft which ultimately received ANSI accreditation.

However, this came with further responsibilities. An ANSI standard is a consensus standard. In order to achieve and maintain this

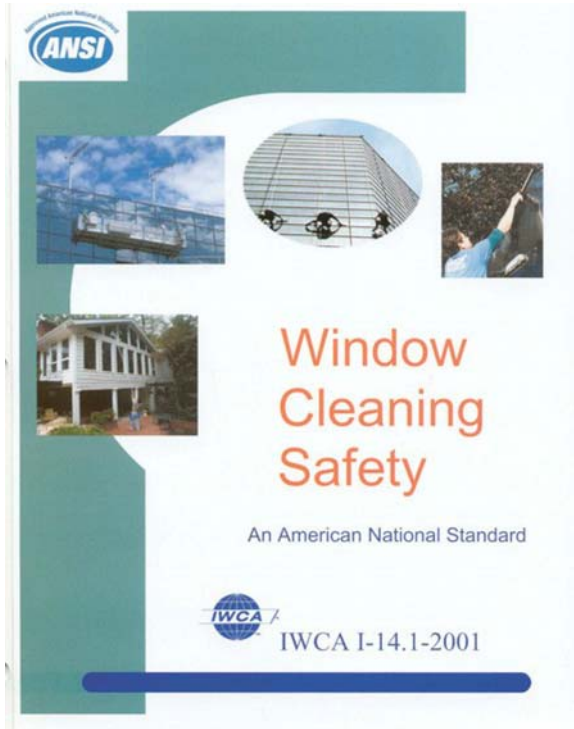
designation, the committee must be comprised of members from segments of those affected by the standard. Additionally, the general public of those in the industry will be able to participate in the development of the standard through a public review process.

Upon acceptance of the ANSI accreditation, the committee had to adopt a base set of procedures to follow. They used ANSI Model Annex A procedures. The primary issue of consensus requirement meant the committee had to increase its size and fulfill no less than three categories of interest; users, producers and general interest.

Slots were filled and the committee began reworking the document. The reason for re-working was because the entire committee had to come to agreement on its contents, thereby fulfilling part one of the consensus process. For over a year, the committee deliberated and the majority of the committee continuously had to defend the 300 foot issue for RDS and swing stages.

Finally, when the committee had come to a consensus, the draft was sent out for the public review process. This is an important function to the standards writing process. The IWCA notified all of its members and any other group or organization which might be affected by the outcome of the standard.

During this first review, over 18 organizations reviewed and responded. There were 2 objections to the suggestion of



the 300 foot height limitation on RDS. One was from a window cleaning company and the other came from the Building Owners and Managers Association International, BOMA.

Each was told by reply that the committee maintained its position because after much deliberation, they had reached a consensus.

BOMA had a representative serving on the I-14 committee, and they asked if they could provide someone to deliver a seminar at our IWCA annual convention in 2000. Tom Trinen was president-elect at that time and he and the entire board were excited that BOMA wanted to give a seminar at our convention.

The speaker was BOMA's attorney and discussed many things during this 75 minute very well attended

seminar. One thing he made very clear was that the IWCA would need to substantiate and prove the need for each item BOMA had objected to in the I-14 draft standard before they would endorse it. BOMA also posted their objections on their website.

After 4 months of non-stop work, the board approved, and Tom Trinen signed and sent a 14 page letter with 21 attachments to the President of BOMA. This letter

and attachments addressed all of BOMA's concerns with well thought out rationale behind each and every concern BOMA had on the I-14 draft standard.

Incidentally this was the first case of the secretariat responding to an objection by a commenter during a public review.

The response by the secretariat indicated that the entire draft version of the I-14 standard was the position of the IWCA. In the opening paragraph of the letter, it is stated that the letter was to provide further clarification of the IWCA position, and to provide BOMA with additional information that may lead to a greater understanding of the issues.

A later paragraph describing the IWCA position states, "the IWCA

felt it imperative to develop a safety standard to protect window cleaners, building owners and managers and the general public. The IWCA safety committee started to write standards for an industry that desperately needed new guidelines. This committee eventually evolved into the leading authority on window cleaning safety in the country. This natural evolution brought this committee to ANSI accreditation with the I-14."

BOMA objected to the requirement of "retrofitting" systems or equipment to their buildings.

On page 4 of the letter, the IWCA summarizes their position on retrofitting buildings.

BOMA objected to their members having to provide written assurance to window cleaning contractors on the condition of their buildings, equipment and related issues.

On page 9 of the letter, the IWCA summarizes their position on written assurances.

BOMA objected to the height restrictions.

On page 12 of the letter, the IWCA summarizes its position on height restrictions by providing 10 different sets of rationale for the 300 foot issue and summarized their position by stating that, "BOMA represents thousands of members and buildings in New York, California and Canada that are already subject to much stricter regulations than required by National Regulations and Federal OSHA.

After investigating and considering all the current international standards, we feel we drafted our standard with a height we feel allows window cleaners to work safely at heights (while properly stabilized) whether the equipment in use is RDS, transportable platforms or permanent powered platforms.”

Within 3 weeks of receiving the letter, BOMA replied to the IWCA and accepted every single response to their objections and therefore; considered them resolved.

As a result of this first phase of public comment, numerous changes were made to the draft. It had to be sent out again for the second phase of public review. During this phase, another 20 organizations replied.

There were no objections to the 300 foot RDS height restriction in the second phase.

All in all, there were over 120 pages and over 300 comments received during the entire review process and as a result numerous revisions were made to the draft. It took nearly 2 years for the I-14 committee to fully consider and respond to each and every comment.

With the public comment period concluded, the committee now had to approve the final draft before publication. It did so by letter ballot and submitted the final draft to ANSI.

On October 25, 2001, the I-14 Standard was approved by ANSI

and the IWCA published and printed the first copy in December, 2001. Immediately after publication, BOMA worked with the IWCA to develop and publish its own reference book entitled, “The Property Professionals Guide Series” –The ANSI/IWCA I-14.1 Window Cleaning Safety Standard.

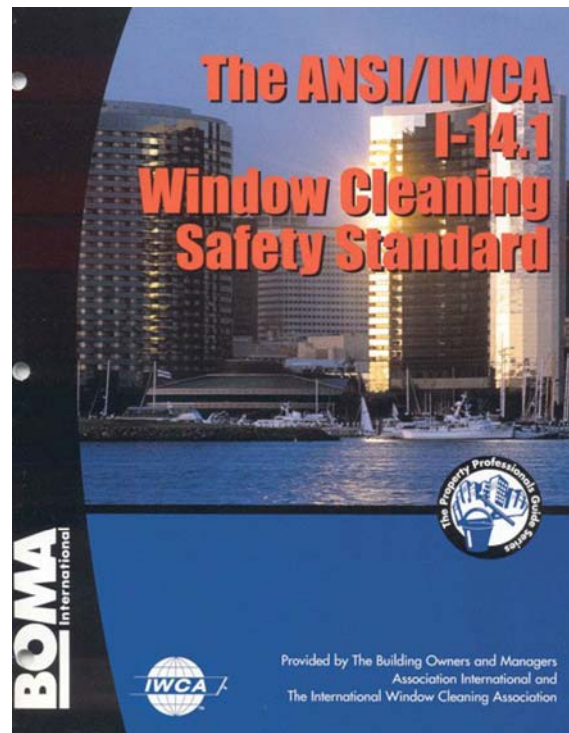
In 2002, the IWCA developed and began a Window Cleaner Certification Program.

Later in 2002, ANSI audited the IWCA to confirm they were following the procedures on which they were accredited during the development and publication of the standard. The IWCA was found to be in compliance.

In May of 2003, Federal OSHA re-opened the rulemaking record for the regulations pertaining to the use of Rope Descending Equipment (controlled descent devices).

OSHA informed the industry that they began work on these rules nearly 13 years ago and the intent of this re-opening was to gather data and information concerning advances in technology and industry practice and updated consensus standards issued since the proposals were published.

OSHA was also seeking comments from interested persons on specific issues concerning each proposal.



Upon completion OSHA was going to determine what other steps, if any, were necessary to finalize the rulemakings on subparts D and I.

The IWCA Board of Directors felt this was the ideal time to reply to the OSHA questions and suggest that the I-14 standard be used by OSHA to draft the new regulation for rope descent systems.

Jim Grady was the IWCA President, who signed and sent the IWCA letter in response to the OSHA Federal Register of May, 2003.

In that letter, the IWCA responded to the OSHA questions on the height recommendation as shown:

34. QUESTION by OSHA:

Are controlled descent devices being used in operations performed more than 300 feet above grade? In

what circumstances are controlled descent devices used above that height? Are additional safety measures used when operating at that height? Please explain. What has been the safety experience in your establishment and/or industry using the devices at that height?

34. RESPONSE by IWCA: The ANSI/IWCA I 14 Window Cleaning Safety Standard recognizes that the use of any transportable suspended equipment (RDS, Suspended Scaffolding) poses additional concerns when used for window cleaning on buildings with service heights exceeding 300 feet above grade. Specifically, the I 14 suggests that user's of this equipment provide special attention to prevent the dangers associated with; a) the potential of sudden climactic changes such as wind gusts, micro bursts or tunneling wind currents and; b) the ability of the Rope Descent System to function without the user having to apply excessive force and; c) the length of time the workers are suspended and; d) the re-rigging and movement of main suspension and safety lines and; e) the ability to provide a prompt rescue in the event of an emergency.

When suspended equipment is used at heights greater than 300' feet above grade it is typically a result of the building not having safe and practicable alternatives. This is a primary reason the I 14 Standard suggests that property professionals evaluate their buildings for window cleaning safety.

The IWCA is unaware of any RDS accidents at heights exceeding 300 feet above grade when the eight safety provisions by OSHA have been followed. The IWCA recognizes a need to address further safety concerns that are not covered in the eight provisions. These concerns are partly ergonomic and environmentally related and industry specific when this equipment is used on buildings.

37. QUESTION by OSHA: Should OSHA limit the use of controlled descent devices to operations performed no higher than 300 feet (91 m) above grade unless access cannot be attained safely and practicably by other means? What additional safety measures are needed for operations performed above 300 feet? Please explain.

37. RESPONSE by IWCA: The IWCA has realized additional concerns when any transportable suspended equipment is used on buildings with service heights exceeding 300 feet above grade. Please see our response to number 34, which outlines these concerns. The IWCA is unaware if these concerns may exist when the equipment is used on structures other than buildings.

38. QUESTION by OSHA: Would limiting controlled descent devices to 300 feet impose added costs in your establishment and/or industry? If so, please provide estimates of the costs and an explanation of how those costs were derived.

38. RESPONSE by IWCA: Limiting the use of controlled descent devices to 300 feet without including a variation that would allow their use at heights greater than that when there are no safe or practicable alternatives would impose added costs to our industry. These costs would be a loss of income for window cleaning contractors who are currently using the equipment on buildings where it has been determined there is no other safe or practicable means to access the windows. In addition, the building(s) would endure additional costs in conjunction with the installation or retro-fit of equipment that ultimately may or may not make the performance of window cleaning safe or practicable.

39. QUESTION by OSHA: How many or what percentage of jobs in your establishment or industry would be affected by such a requirement?

39. RESPONSE by IWCA: At this time the IWCA has not obtained specific numbers in order to provide an accurate answer to this question.

ANSI itself does not develop American National Standards: it provides all interested U.S. parties with a neutral venue to come together and work towards common agreements. The process to create these voluntary standards is guided by the Institute's cardinal principles of consensus, due process and openness and depends heavily upon data gathering and

compromises among a diverse range of stakeholders.

The Institute ensures that access to the standards process, including an appeals mechanism, is made available to anyone directly or materially affected by a standard that is under development. Thousands of individuals, companies, government agencies and other organizations such as labor, industrial and consumer groups voluntarily contribute their knowledge, talents and efforts to standards development.

With regards to the I-14 document, there are numerous reasons why the IWCA should give its unwavering support. The IWCA was given the opportunity to promulgate an ANSI standard back in 1999. This process gave the IWCA legitimacy and clout and opened the eyes of all affected parties in our industry. Becoming the secretariat for a standard under ANSI accreditation is quite an accomplishment. ANSI standards are a privilege to write. They are well recognized throughout the nation and recognized by the United States Court System. ANSI Standards are commonly used as standard practices of care which prudent businesses follow.

The IWCA is a volunteer organization with no barriers for membership or any outside oversight. There are no “checks and balances” which ensure members of the IWCA are acting in accordance with the Associations Code of Ethics or

recommended safety practices. Due to the lack of outside oversight and the very nature of an industry trade association, an American National Standard carries far more weight than the IWCA, therefore it is essential that an ANSI consensus driven standard be fully supported by the IWCA.

Since the publication of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard in 2001, thousands of window cleaning contractors and others have received safety training via

Numerous States have adopted portions of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard into their regulations for window cleaning.

the IWCA safety and training program and the window cleaner certification program. All the information in each is based entirely upon the contents of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard.

Thousands of window cleaning contractors have upgraded their operations by purchasing new equipment, developing written work plans and providing a more comprehensive training program, all as a result of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard.

Thousands of building owners have upgraded and retrofitted

their buildings, increased their maintenance and inspection of existing equipment and provided written assurances to contractors, all as a result of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard.

Thousands of architects and engineers look to the ANSI IWCA I-14 standard for recommendation and guidelines on designing safe buildings for window cleaning to take place.

Numerous States have adopted portions of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard into their regulations for window cleaning.

Hundreds of enforcement citations have been issued by Federal OSHA, all referencing the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard.

It is impossible to say how many lives have been saved because of the ANSI IWCA I-14 Standard, but it is known that window cleaning incidents and fatalities have dropped significantly since its publication. In fact in 2010, there were no fatalities on suspended equipment being used in the window cleaning industry.

In summary, thousands of window cleaners, building owners, trade associations, standards committees, architects, designers, consultants and regulatory agencies have all come to rely heavily upon the I-14 standard, and this is all because of the fact that the IWCA position on accepted safe window cleaning practices is the ANSI IWCA I-14.1 Window Cleaning Safety Standard. 