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WINDOW CLEANER

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Scratched Glass: part 3

GLASS RESTORATION

sponges: *natural vs. synthetic*

SOFTWARE *for Window Cleaners*

THE I-14 Standard *update*



"Focus I-14 Safety Standard: the next five years?"

By Gary Mauer

Officially there is very little ANSI/IWCA I-14.1 Window Cleaning Safety Standard news - unofficially, there is plenty.

According to committee chair Stefan Bright, their September meeting in San Antonio, Texas ended with a committee vote to re-affirm the current standard. According to Bright, "[Re-affirmation] would mean that the current version extends itself for another 5 years. In the case of the I-14, the intent is to re-affirm just until the new draft is ready for publication."

The IWCA, which holds the copyright and acts as secretariat for the committee, will continue to sell hard copies of the current standard by phone from their new headquarters in Kansas City, and online at www.iwca.org.

The committee has been working on a new draft over the last 5 years, and numerous updates have been approved by the committee, many of which are common knowledge by now, but they haven't been published. One option would have been to publish changes in an addendum, which would have been subject to a public review similar to the original approval process. That was not done, so it's important to realize that ANSI approval hasn't been sought for any changes past, present or future. The official version of the I-14 standard still stands - as originally published on October 25, 2001.

That's about all the official information you can get until something new gets published. Unlike a trade association or any individual, the I-14 committee has no business predicting change or expressing either optimism or pessimism about the next version. That would actually undermine their credibility as a consensus committee. We relied on the observations of individuals in order to produce this article.

AN ONGOING PROCESS.

The I-14 committee must conduct its business openly, in accordance with ANSI guidelines - and a recent audit by ANSI confirms that it has been in compliance. This means open meetings, communication with affected parties, public review periods, etc. as prescribed by ANSI.

Meeting notices are posted on the IWCA site. We were told that if and when there is another public review period for a new version of the I-14 standard, notices will be posted in ANSI's Standards Action newsletter, at the IWCA site, as well as to window cleaning magazines such as AWC. Because BOMA (Building Owners & Managers Association) is involved and keenly interested, it is assumed they will take steps to notify all of their own members.

The process provides affected parties with many opportunities to provide input, but it doesn't necessarily require a heroic effort by a committee to solicit input. One committee member explained privately, "If we talk about a particular item now, before the document is finalized, we risk people getting concerned over nothing, because that item may not even make it into our final draft. A host of new objections, questions and comments - all of which the committee must address, even if we've already addressed them in the past - could cause months of delays."

At any rate, the next meeting of the I-14 Committee is tentatively scheduled for mid April 2007 in Chicago. There are always interested window cleaners attending as guests, and Chicago should be no exception. Committee member Theresa Martin encourages window cleaners to attend. Theresa says that some of the input the committee gets from window cleaners is invaluable, that any window cleaner can make a difference, and that it's very easy to get involved at that level. "If you raise your hand, you will be called upon, and they will listen."

Ron Friman of Expert Window Cleaning has attended many I-14 meetings, and he will get involved when he feels he has something to add to a discussion. Ron says window cleaners should go to these meetings and urges others to attend when they can, "But you have to be organized; educated, and you have to be civil, or you won't get anywhere."

Tom Trinen doesn't think concern about the fate of chair work should be the motivation for attending an I-14 meeting. He says, "The scaffold versus chair controversy in my mind is a lot of hype. While the scaffold boys... have their own agenda, the reality will never happen. The chair is too much a part of our industry. Overall, the I 14 is pretty well balanced and no one group really gets their way completely."

Tom adds, "I think a lot of [window cleaners] would be surprised to see how much valuable technical and engineering input most of the non-window cleaners bring to the discussions, and how much more technical our industry really is."

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?

What' will be different about the standard, when changes are finally published? Tom Trinen says the new version will be improved, but it won't be radically different. "There are many complicated aspects of acceptable rigging practices, such as horizontal lifelines, sling lines and positioning lines to take an example, which were not addressed in the original standard in the kind of depth they deserve. These types of gray areas are currently being addressed, but complicated issues require more language, and that takes time."

Other sources tell us to look for possible updates regarding roof access from a ladder, rooftop rolling while suspended, accessing a bosun's chair that is already over the side, and working near powerful antennas.

One area that may not be fully addressed this time around would be buildings set up for the use of RDS (rope descent systems) at heights much greater than 300', instead of installing permanent installations. Part of the problem as explained to me is that the standard's language regarding RDS work above 300' is open to liberal interpretation - or misinterpretation. Some very tall newer buildings have opted out of permanent installations, and as seems to be the

case at any height, they can find window cleaners willing to do the work.

Tom Trinen says, "I'm all for freedom of choice, but once you've responded to a call at 4 am to go move a couple sets of 500 foot long, wind beaten, wet ropes hanging on a high rise, [you] understand why roof cars should be required on certain buildings. And, a height restriction is the only way anyone will be compelled to follow it." For that to happen, he feels both RDS and permanent equipment factions will eventually need to support the same height number, "so divided or not, we really need each other to present a unified plan."

The I-14 committee must conduct its business openly, in accordance with ANSI guidelines - and a recent audit by ANSI confirms that it has been in compliance. This means open meetings, communication with affected parties, public review periods, etc. as prescribed by ANSI. However, this doesn't mean they aren't concerned about attracting so much input that the committee's work is hampered. One committee member explains, "If we talk about a particular item now, before the document is finalized, we risk people getting concerned over nothing, because that item may not even make it into our final draft. A host of new objections, questions and comments - all of which the committee must address - could cause months of delays."

As things stand now, the I-14 committee has that April meeting scheduled in Chicago, and if the committee can approve a draft, the next phase will be to arrange for

a public review period - an opportunity for affected parties to download the new draft, and submit their own questions and comments to the committee. Depending on the nature of public comments and the committee's response, a new standard may be submitted to ANSI in late summer of 2007. In the event runs into difficulty addressing all the comments received, it's possible that yet another I-14 meeting and public review period will be required.

"Hopefully it won't come to that", said Stefan Bright, "but we need to get this right."

I-14 Committee roster

User Category

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Andrew Kreidenweis • Braco Window Cleaning Service, Inc.

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Bob Zeolla • Sunset Cleaning Company, Inc. • American Anchor

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