Safety report
2017

Index

1. Introduction

SOFT safety reports focus on near misses, incidents and accidents that have occurred within a given period.

We have decided to extend this document to also comment on other trends in Rope Access. A few of our members have been asking for more statistics covering other areas in the trade.

These reports are intended to be publicly available and contributing to learning, with the aim of keeping individual operators as safe as possible in their daily work. However, the information contained in our safety reports will also be useful for other HSE personnel. Also, we will try to describe trends to better understand underlying causes.

The material is taken from incidents reported in CertaSoft and other reports received during the year. The incidents are reported by the Technical Manager at each member company. The information is processed by SOFT in advance and anonymized. This is to ensure that reported events are relevant to rope access work (RAT). We focus on events that occurred where RAT was used as an access method and/or where RAT equipment was used. We also include incidents that posed a risk to RAT personnel but did not directly arise from RAT work. Incidents not directly related to RAT work are omitted. In other words, incidents that could just as easily have occurred during work other than RAT.

2. Definitions

Near miss – Dangerous situation/incident that, under slightly different circumstances, could have led to injury or damage to RAT equipment.

Unwanted incident – An incident that has a caused minor injury or resulted in damaged to/failure of RAT equipment.

Accident – An incident that has caused serious injury or death.

Minor injury – An injury requiring first-aid, medical treatment or any injury that does not result in permanent injury.

Serious injury – An injury that has caused permanent injury, disability or death.

Hazard – An action or circumstances that can cause an unwanted incident.

Consequence – The result/possible result of an unwanted incident.

Probability – The degree to which it is likely that an incident will occur.

Near miss – An incident that, under slightly different circumstances, could have resulted in injury to personnel or a third party or damage to equipment.

Unwanted incident – An incident of minor significance that has caused injury to personnel (short lost time injury) or to a third party or damage to equipment.

Accident – An incident that has caused serious injury to personnel (long-term lost time injury) or a third party or damage to equipment.

Risk – An expression of the product of probability and consequence.

3. Incident report

Total number of hours:

RAT hours in this report are collected from the digital system for SOFT called CertaSoft.

	2015	**2016**	**2017**
Working hours	241 048	231 290	250 648
Courses/training/seminar	31 527	26 723	23 800
Total hours	272 575	258 013	274 448

There may be hours that have not been reported in CertaSoft.

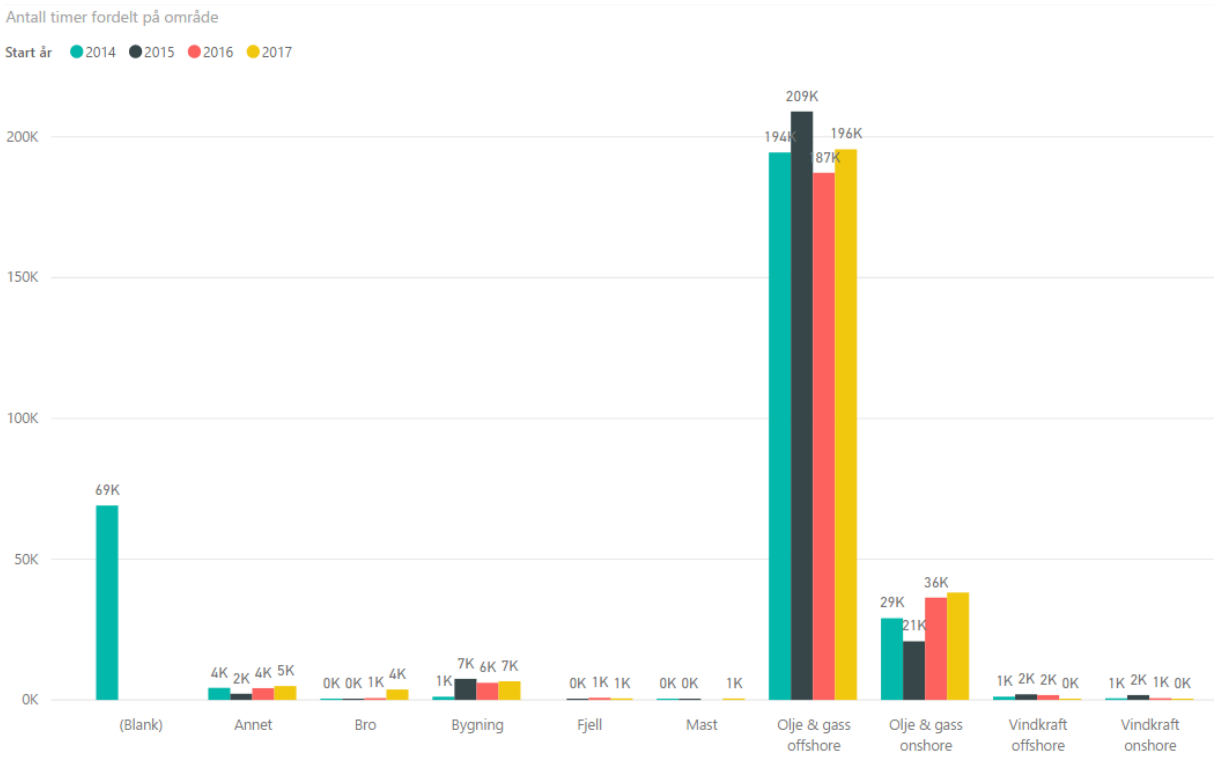


Fig. 1

Overview of working hours since 2014.

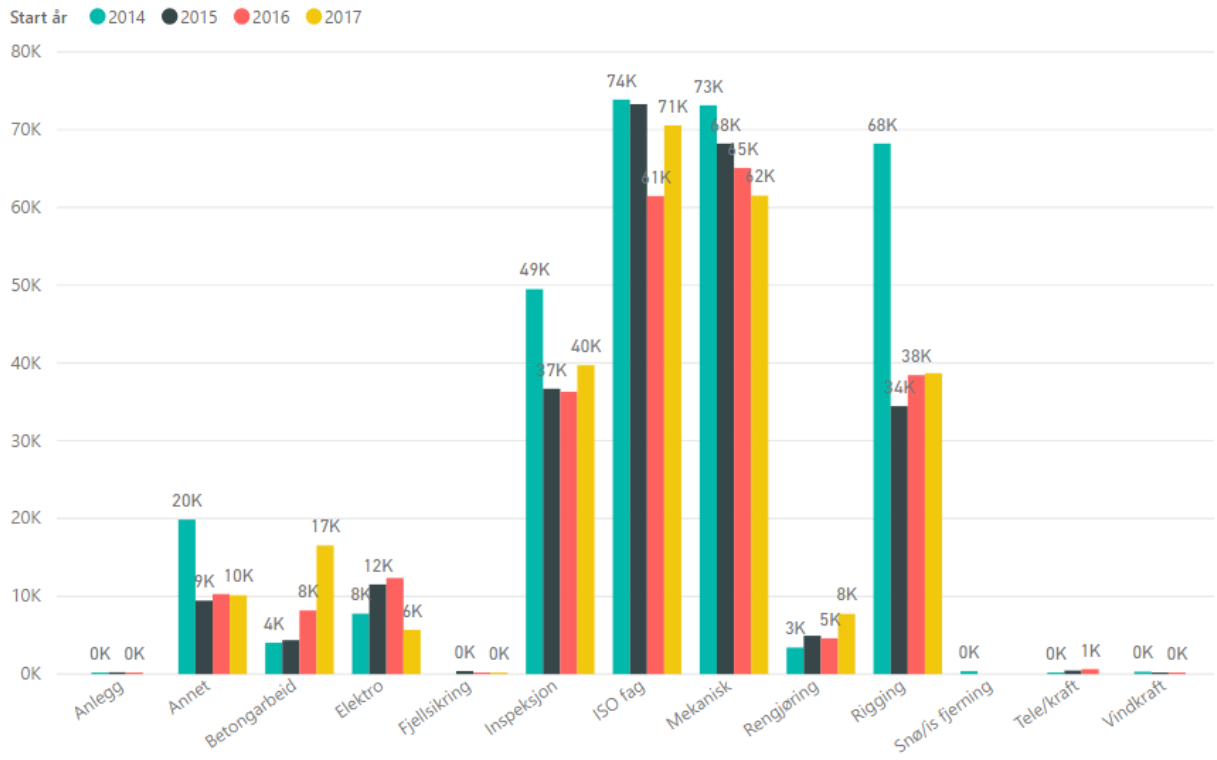


Fig. 2

Number of hours worked in different areas

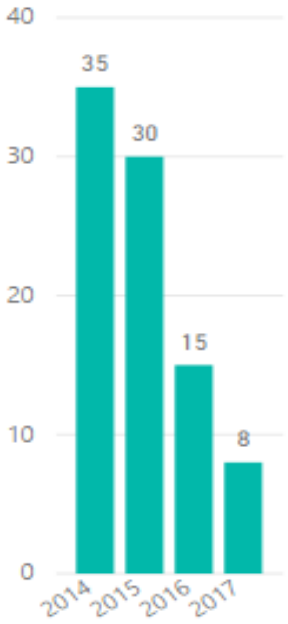


Fig. 3

Development of published incidents/accidents since 2014. 3 of the incidents during 2017 were not published due to lack of relevance to rope access.

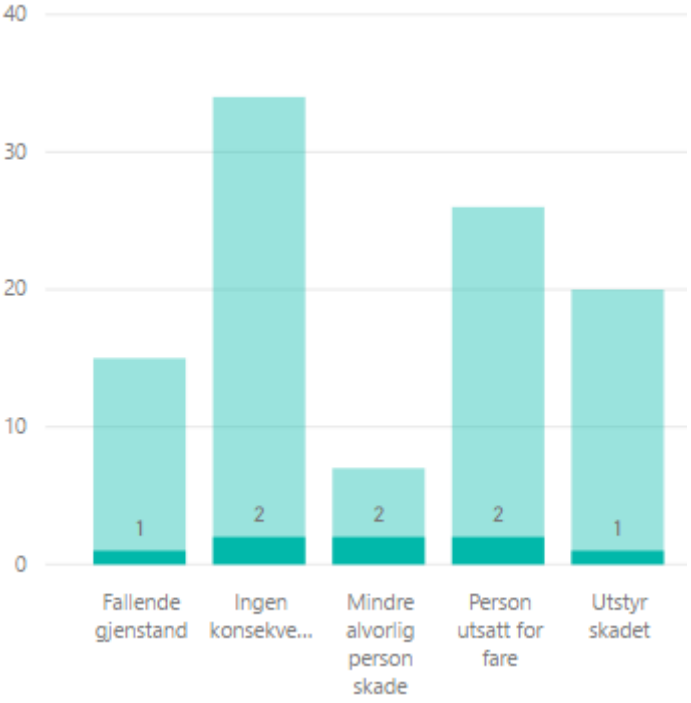


Fig 4

Number of incidents measured according to consequence (dark green: 2017, Light green: 2014-2017)

1. Falling objects
2. No consequence
3. Minor personal injury
4. Person exposed to danger

Equipment damaged

4. Trends

There has been an increase of 6,3% of working hours compared to 2016. The reason for this is probably the low market in the oil industry. ISO work represents the biggest block (70 000 hours), followed by inspection and rigging.

- There has been reported **11** incidents/near misses in 2017 (published), while **15** in 2016 (see fig. 3). So, it's evident that the number of reports is decreasing, even though the numbers of working hours is rising. The number og working hours is even higher in 2017 than in 2015 where the number was **37** (30 published). We can only speculate on the reason for this decrease. But, it is fair to think that the decrease is caused by fear from consequences in a troubled market. If this is the case, we are in a danger of losing a good opportunity to learn from each other about situations that can occur in the future. Reporting and sharing knowledge is an essential tool to maintain a high level of safety.

5 of **15** (5 out of 15 in 2015) certified companies has reported to CertaSoft. Most of these are ISO companies offshore. **No** non-certified companies have reported any near misses/incidents. Today there are 27 member companies that delivers services or training. This means that less than 1/5 of our members finds it worth sharing this type of sharing. This is discouraging and worrying.

Near misses:

Only 1 case was categorized as near miss. This happened during training where a connector type Maillon got a deformation because it was not properly tightened.

Incidents:

9 of the cases reported (both published and un-published) was about incidents. Here we have several categories: un-wanted behavior, equipment opened unintentionally, poor communication to external parties and falling objects. Also, during rescue demonstration one person got a fracture in the rib because of a radio pressed against the chest.

Accidents:

One case has been categorized as an accident. A person shot himself in the foot with a high-pressure device. It became a first aid injury.

Equipment/practices

1 incident during the year was quite severe. When working on an offshore crane the crane started to move, even though the rope access team had clarified with the crane personnel in beforehand that it was safe. Luckily there was no personnel on the ropes due to lunch break. But some rope access equipment and crane equipment became damaged.

Other topics

From time to time SOFT get notes of concern from members and their employees. Quite many persons have gone from being employees to self-employed. As self-employed they rent themselves back to their former employer of others. This is a trend that we look upon with great worry. We fear that the robustness of the rope access system disintegrates. The rates are low, and the competition is hard. Time horizons are also very short. This leads to experienced people quitting the oil and gas industry. And many have no plans to return.

Also, we see that pressure up against rope access hours continues. Several rented safety leaders have expressed pressure from contractors to make a conformity between rope access hours and hours based on salary and made for invoice documentation. In several disciplines it is normal to get an increase in salary while doing rope access.

The development is definitely going the wrong way. Economics rules and good culture within the companies disintegrates. SOFT has no other mandate than to speak for its members. Based on this we have sent some notes of concern to the authorities.

After an initiative from the Norwegian Petroleum Safety authorities (Ptil) there was held a meeting with SOFT. Their aim was to learn more about rope access. They became quite surprised by the scale of rope access work done offshore every year. This has resulted in a closer view on rope access during 2018. This we will follow with great interest.

Authorities on shore has so far not paid any significant interest to rope access. The reason for this is maybe because rope access on shore is taking place mostly in rural areas.

5. NS 9600

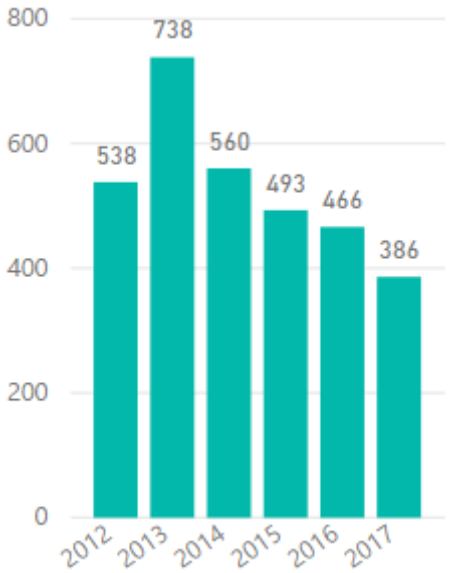
NS 9600 is under revision. Status is that the working group has delivered a final text to Standards Norway for a review. Per January 2018 it looks like that the hearing will take place during winter. It is fair to say that there is suggested some changes by the working group. The standard will consist of 6 parts while today it is 4 parts. The reason for this is that Standards Norway wants to separate requirements of certification into a separate part as a consequence of implementing the ISO model. Further on, there is made a part that describes “best practice”. This will lighten the work for employers, safety personnel, and other personnel doing inspection on worksites. Some requirements are strengthened, and others are not so. The aim of the work has been to maintain the same level of safety as before, but still make the document more user friendly and specify certain requirements.

Class B as we know it today will be removed in this new proposal. This because the level of safety and competence are different between the classes and is wrong in a standard. We also recognize that other rope access systems around the world are more like class A. During the hearing process the working group will produce a document explaining the proposed changes.

6. Certification of personnel

Due to the change of scope of this report we will in now and in the future make comments on the development of certification of personnel. As most of you are aware of, the number is decreasing. The reason for this is the downfall over time within oil and gas which is the biggest arena for rope access. The number of certifications has since 2013 almost halved. Many operators choose to go the full period on their level before going up to the next level. Also, many certificates have expired.

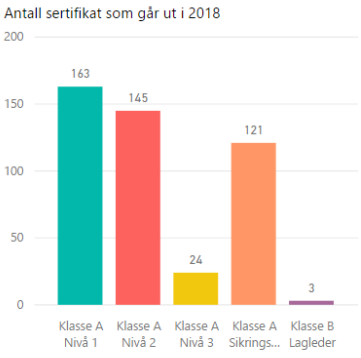
Overview of certifications pr. year:

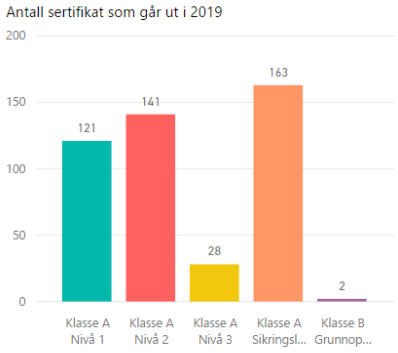


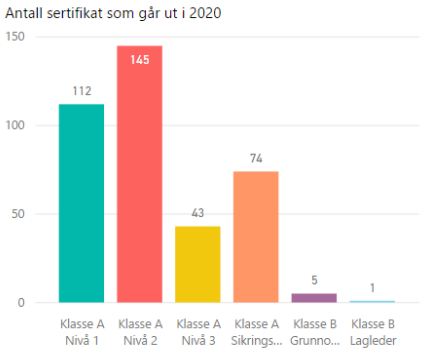
Status pr. 1st of January 2018

By the start of 2018 there is 1291 valid certificates.

These certificates are spread on following year of expiry and level of certification:







7. prNS 9610 Fallprotection

As maybe many of you are aware of, the is an ongoing work on establishing a Norwegian standard for fall protection. This work is done at Standard Norway. The project has been carried on for 3 years now. SOFT has been, and still are, participating in a tight cooperation together with other participants like training companies, the Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authorities, Statnett, BKK Enotek, the scaffolding industry and so on.

The starting point for making a standard is that the regulations now are functionally, which means that they point out goals to be achieved, not how to achieve them. This is optional. But, standards shall function as a solution that points on how the given requirements in laws and regulations be reached.

What we have done so far is to describe what is relevant training for users of fall protection equipment, crucial principles for use of this kind of equipment, requirements for courses, instructors and companies providing training.

The standard text is roughly ready, and we are now in a process of cleaning the text before hearing. We hpe the hearing will take place during 2018.