

Working at fall risk & road safety

It is with great sadness that we advise our members that, yet another person died on site as a result of falling from heights. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family of the victim.

This just highlights once again how important it is to provide proper edge protection capable of preventing anyone from falling. The circumstances related to the fall are not clear so far be it for me to make any comment in this regard or speculate about what happened on site.

My plea to you is, ***please don't let this happen again***. There are so many products and systems available to prevent falls yet falls from height remains one of the biggest causes of accidents and fatalities, so please use them to save a life.

The Construction Regulations under sub-section 10 make it very clear and states a follow:

CR 10 (4) A contractor must ensure that –

(a) All unprotected openings in floors, edges, slabs, hatchways and stairways are adequately guarded, fenced or barricaded or that similar means are used to safeguard any person from falling through such openings.

(d) fall arrest equipment is used only where it is not reasonably practicable to use fall prevention equipment.

Too often workers are supplied with full body harnesses to perform work in an area which should be made safe to prevent falls. In many instances these harnesses are attached to somewhere which wouldn't be able to withstand the force of someone falling. Fall arrest harnesses are only effective when a person is able to hook onto a safe point 6,75 meters from the ground. We need to change our mindset in this regard and provide safe working areas for everyone on site.

Road safety

I often see un-roadworthy vehicles parked on site and in fact just this morning I saw a vehicle with tires so smooth that the vehicle should be taken off the road. This is just one example, but the question is this, what are we doing as an industry, full of safety officers, about these un-roadworthy vehicles. This vehicle was parked in an area where the PC's employees park, so I asked the safety person on site what they could potentially do about this. We agreed that this should be taken up with the person because failure to do something about this could result in the driver having a serious accident.

We are entering "silly season" and I have had to contend with huge traffic jams over the past few days on the N2 due to multiple accidents. I would like to suggest that all contractors make a concerted effort to talk to your staff and warn them about the dangers of driving whilst under the influence, driving un-roadworthy vehicles, speeding and driving overloaded vehicles.

I trust you will all have a wonderful festive season and come back with renewed energy to take on the challenges of 2019.

Deon Bester, November 2018