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Safety net developments and guidance

FASET, the UK-based trade association for the safety net, rigging and temporary safety systems industry, covers fall arrest safety equipment training, along with best practice guidance for roof over-netting, edge protection, stair towers, tensioned access platforms and access platform decking. The following is a periodic update on developments on the association's work.

Getting the facts about falls: the association is running a campaign to discover the facts about falls into safety nets, following concerns that such incidents frequently go unreported, especially when those falling escape injury, thanks to the

net below fully absorbing the energy of the fall.

FASET maintains that it is vital that this information is collected and collated to better understand the nature of the incidents and the reasons for them occurring in order to identify and



respond to what is actually happening in the workplace and develop guidance and best practice to help reduce falls from height - still the single biggest cause of accidents.

The data will also provide a more accurate picture of the number of

times safety nets are deployed, something the association claims is consistently under reported. In order to encourage those involved to provide the information, incidents can now be reported anonymously through the association's website.

The selection of access methods to install and dismantle safety netting

Work at height is hazardous, and safety net riggers are always at risk while installing the safety nets that protect others. With this in mind FASET has published a new Good Practice Guide.

The guide is the work of the association's health and safety committee with assistance from the Health and Safety Executive to provide guidance on the principal methods recommended for safely rigging and de-rigging safety nets. The guide begins by highlighting the requirements of the Work at Height Regulations and then goes on to describe the six methods recommended by FASET.

The preferred method is the use of remote attachment devices followed by - in order of preference - aerial work platforms, ladders (to a maximum of height of 4.5 metres), industrial climbing techniques, rope access and finally mobile access towers.

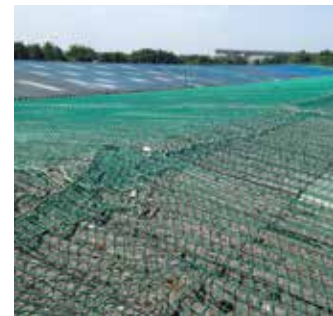
Remote attachment devices allow rigging and de-rigging to be carried out remotely from the level below and therefore do not expose the installer to any of the risks associated with working at height. The net is offered up into position via a pole from the safety of the floor beneath. The method is not without limitations and these are fully explained in the guide.

The document explains the advantages and potential disadvantages of all six different methods.



New over netting guidance

In the absence of a British or European standard, FASET has taken the initiative and developed a comprehensive guidance document covering the use of safety nets over existing roofs - more commonly referred to as roof over-netting. It joins more than 25 best practice documents already free to download on the FASET website www.faset.org.uk



Produced with the assistance of the National Federation of Roofing Contractors (NFRC) and the Health and Safety Executive following exhaustive physical testing, over-netting should only be used as a last resort, and standard, under slung safety netting must always be used where possible and practical.

A relatively new development in the safety netting industry, over-netting is used when fixing a new roof over an existing, fragile roof. With a foreword by the NFRC, the free, 14 page document covers everything from the responsibilities of the client and principal designer, through to the suitability of safety netting materials, safety during installation, and, finally, the six specific steps recommended by FASET for correctly installing roof-over netting.

Beware of 'Urban Climbers'

FASET has also issued a 'Safety Alert' about urban climbers. Fortunately an extremely rare occurrence, the association is nevertheless warning of the dangers posed by urban climbers determined to misuse safety nets by taking their sport to new and bizarre extremes, not only putting themselves at risk, but also risking compromising the integrity of the net and its subsequent ability to save lives and prevent injury in the event of a genuine fall from height.

FASET is urging vigilance to prevent climbers gaining access in the first place, and, if they do, to make sure afterwards that the nets involved are professionally checked for damage.

For details of FASET members, training and access to the association's free guidance, go to www.faset.org.uk

FASET
Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training

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