

EPF Guidance Note 03 (Version 1)

CROSS-CONTAMINATION OF EDGE PROTECTION SYSTEMS



Edge Protection systems are required to perform a safety critical function. The cross-contamination of components from multiple manufacturers could unwittingly result in an edge protection system that fails when relied upon, resulting in serious consequences.

BS EN 13374:2013 + A1: 2018 (the British Standard for Edge Protection Systems) states “The edge protection system as a whole, as well as each component, shall fulfil the individual load requirements separately.” EPF Members therefore undertake component design, calculation and testing to ensure their systems (an assembly of their own components) perform when relied upon.

EPF Members do not test their components for use in conjunction with other manufacturers products. Any deviation from the proven and tested complete solution, including the cross-contamination of components, is not the responsibility of the manufacturer / supplier, and is unlikely to be endorsed by them.

For designs, calculations and testing to be carried out for edge protection systems, the dimensions and material properties of each component need to be known and understood by the competent engineer. Manufacturer changes and developments to individual components also need to be taken into consideration on a continuous basis to ensure the created system integrity is maintained. This level of detail is only available to the manufacturer of the individual components and the resultant system.

Proprietary edge protection systems should only be installed by competent operatives who have received system specific training and are installing the system in accordance with the manufacturer’s user instructions. Solutions that comprise of a mixture of manufacturers components are unlikely to have sufficient manufacturer’s user instructions which are needed to:

- create and deliver operative training
- create and deliver site-manager training
- refer to during the installation of the system
- determine suitable inspection levels and intervals
- refer to during inspections of the system
- refer to during adjustment or modification of the system
- refer to during dismantling of the system



Figure 1. An example of cross-contamination of edge protection systems.

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The EPF recommends that under no circumstances should you mix the components of different manufacturers. If you choose to create or use a cross-contaminated system, you must be able to provide clear justifications to support your decision and ensure that all operatives involved with the edge protection system have received sufficient training and have the appropriate user instructions available to them.

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) states that any person that amends a design or instructs another person to amend a design takes on design liability.

Unless specifically stated by the manufacturers of all the components in a cross-contaminated edge protection system, they will not support their use. In the event of an incident:

- **You** will be responsible
- **You** will be accountable
- **You** will have to explain your actions if brought to court

References

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, SI 2015/51.

