

Procurement Decisions Can Shape Safety Outcomes When Working at Height

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When facilities managers appoint contractors to work at height, price, programme and availability are often key considerations.

But there's another factor that can have an even greater impact on the success of a project: competence.

Whether installing safety netting, edge protection, access platform decking or other temporary safety systems, the quality of the contractor selected can directly influence the safety of everyone working on site.

Competence should never be assumed

Temporary safety systems are life-critical.

When installed correctly, they help protect workers from one of the construction industry's greatest risks – falls from height. But these systems are only as effective as the people responsible for designing, installing, inspecting and maintaining them.

For facilities managers and principal contractors, verifying specialist competence can be difficult. Many contractors appear similar on paper, making it challenging to identify those who have been independently assessed against recognised industry standards.

Independent assurance provides confidence

This is where third-party assurance becomes valuable.

FASET members undergo a rigorous annual audit covering not only their business management systems

but also the specialist technical activities they undertake. The audit is recognised bySSIP and UKAS, providing clients with independent evidence of competence rather than self-declared claims.

For procurement teams, this means greater confidence that the organisations they appoint have demonstrated their commitment to recognised standards, competent personnel and safe working practices.

Better procurement supports better safety

Choosing a competent contractor is about far more than satisfying procurement requirements.

It helps create the conditions for safer project delivery.

When specialist contractors have robust management systems, trained operatives and independently verified competence, clients can spend less time questioning baseline capability and more time focusing on the project-specific risks that genuinely influence safe outcomes.

Good procurement, in other words, becomes part of the safety strategy.

Raising standards across the industry

For more than two decades, FASET has worked to improve standards across the temporary safety systems industry through independent auditing, recognised training and technical guidance. Today, its members continue to support clients, principal contractors and facilities managers in delivering safer work at height across the built environment.

When lives depend on temporary safety systems performing exactly as intended, selecting a contractor based on independently verified competence isn't simply good procurement.

It's an investment in safer outcomes.