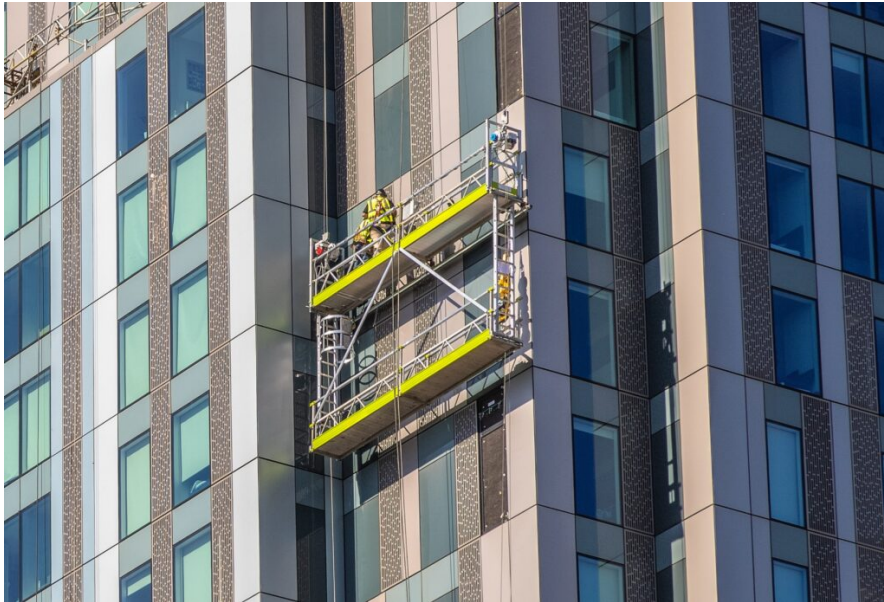


Why Competence Matters More Than Ever in Suspended Access

4 hours ago



Facilities managers are under increasing pressure to deliver safe, compliant and cost-effective maintenance across increasingly complex buildings. Whether it's façade inspections, window cleaning, cladding maintenance or repairs, suspended access systems have become an essential part of modern building management.

Yet while these systems provide safe access to challenging environments, they also demand specialist knowledge to ensure they are designed, installed, inspected and maintained correctly.

Too often, procurement decisions are driven primarily by cost or programme pressures. However, when it comes to suspended access, choosing the right contractor is about far more than securing the lowest quotation. It is about protecting building users, safeguarding maintenance teams and ensuring long-term compliance.

Duty holders have legal responsibilities to ensure contractors are competent and capable of carrying out their work safely. Demonstrating that competence can be challenging, particularly when facilities managers are managing multiple suppliers across large and diverse estates.

For more than 40 years, the [Specialist Access Engineering & Maintenance Association \(SAEMA\)](#) has worked to promote high standards across the suspended access industry, providing technical guidance and representing companies committed to professionalism, competence and continual improvement.

Becky Clutton, Head of Member Support and Operations at SAEMA, said: "Competence isn't a box-ticking exercise; it's the foundation of safe suspended access. As buildings become more complex, clients need confidence that the companies they appoint have the technical expertise and professional standards to

deliver safe, compliant solutions throughout the life of a building.”

This is where recognised industry standards and independent assessment become invaluable.

Working with contractors who are members of a recognised trade association such as SAEMA provides an additional level of confidence that robust technical and operational standards have already been demonstrated. SAEMA member companies are committed to maintaining high levels of competence, operating in accordance with recognised industry best practice and investing in the ongoing development of their people and services.

Rather than starting from scratch with every procurement exercise, facilities managers can have greater assurance that they are engaging organisations that understand not only how suspended access systems operate, but also the wider responsibilities surrounding inspection, maintenance, compliance and safe working at height.

The benefits extend well beyond regulatory compliance. Competent suspended access specialists are more likely to specify appropriate systems, carry out thorough inspections, maintain equipment correctly and identify potential issues before they develop into costly

failures. This not only reduces operational risk but can also improve the performance and longevity of valuable building assets.

As buildings continue to evolve—with increasingly complex façades, taller structures and more sophisticated access equipment—the need for specialist expertise will only become greater. Keeping pace with changing technology, legislation and industry guidance requires continuous professional development and close collaboration across the sector.

As the UK’s leading trade association for the suspended access industry, SAEMA plays an important role in supporting this progression by sharing technical knowledge, promoting best practice and encouraging the highest standards of safety, quality and professionalism throughout the supply chain.

Ultimately, good procurement is about reducing risk as much as managing cost. Selecting contractors whose competence has been independently recognised through professional association membership can simplify supplier selection while providing reassurance that quality, safety and technical excellence remain at the heart of every project.

For facilities management professionals, investing time in choosing competent suspended access specialists is not simply a procurement decision—it’s an investment in the long-term safety, performance and resilience of the buildings they manage.