

Skyriders stands tall

Written by Sheq Management

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A zero-fatality rate, in line with OHSAS 18001:2007 and the Institute for Work at Height's best practice, is a crowning achievement of Skyriders Access Specialists. We speak to marketing manager Mike Zinn

Safety is critical in the rope-access industry. "Safety is paramount in any industry. Mining, for example, is an inherently dangerous environment, as it encompasses both work at height and work in confined spaces," Zinn comments.

Skyriders employs teams of highly experienced and trained rope-access technicians. "The career path of a rope-access technician is ongoing from a skills-development point of view. One needs to bear in mind that rope access is just a means of moving from one work point to another work point. This requires renewal every three years, which poses the challenge of progressing from Level 1 to Level 2 and, ultimately, to Level 3, depending on experience in terms of hours logged," Zinn stresses.

Apart from the rope-access discipline, itself, technicians at Skyriders also require trade skills such as welding, non-destructive testing and inspection, grit blasting, ultra-high-pressure washing, protective-coating application and rigging.



Current projects and contracts being undertaken by Skyriders include: ongoing work on new power station builds; inspection and maintenance of industrial smokestacks in Indonesia; inspection and maintenance at a gold mine in western Africa; ongoing maintenance and inspection work at a large petrochemical company in Mpumalanga; and work at Eskom's existing fleet.

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A recent major project, which involved undertaking essential maintenance on the 237-m-tall Sentech Tower in Johannesburg (known originally as the Brixton Tower), showcased Skyriders' expertise and working-at-height safety.

The project was particularly daunting due to the height of the tower. This was combined with the fact that the five-person Skyriders team had to effectively abseil and simultaneously follow the cables downwards at the correct angle in order to be able to carry out the maintenance work.

"Another major challenge, apart from the height of the tower, was the high wind and the potential for electrical storms," Zinn adds.

"When the cost of access is disproportionate to the scope of work, when time is of the essence, and where height or confined space poses a challenge, that is when Skyriders can offer an optimal solution, which is cost-effective, time-saving, and also the safest possible option for all those involved," Zinn concludes.