

CROSS-CONTAMINATION OF ACCESS PLATFORM DECKING SYSTEM COMPONENTS

What do we mean by cross-contamination?

Components from more than one manufacturer being used together as a “system”.

Why does mixing components matter?

Access Platform Decking systems are designed and manufactured to provide a safe working platform which eliminates the risk of a fall. If components from different manufacturers are used together to create a “cross-contaminated system”, it could result in an unsafe working platform which fails and leads to serious injury, structural damage, and equipment damage.

Why is it important to only use a system as designed & tested by the manufacturer?

Manufacturers of Access Platform Decking systems design and test their system (an assembly of their own components) so that they perform when required. They do not test their own components alongside other manufacturers components which means that if a “cross-contaminated system” is created on site, the performance (stability, load ratings etc.) is unknown.

When a manufacturer designs a system, the dimensions and material properties of each component are known which allows the manufacturer to establish the performance of the system and test this accordingly. Manufacturers are also aware of ongoing changes and developments made to individual components, how they interact with their other components and ultimately how this effects the performance of the system. This level of detail is not known by other manufacturers or those on site who may wish to create a “cross-contaminated system”.

What other implications are there to creating a “cross-contaminated system”?

Only competent operatives should be permitted to install an Access Platform Decking System. This means the operative will have received FASET Access Platform Decking training including manufacturer system training and will be following the manufacturer’s installation manual. Solutions that comprise of a mixture of manufacturers components will not have a manufacturer’s installation manual which is 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.

If a cross-contaminated system is used, the installer and site controller takes on the responsibility to provide clear justifications to support the 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.

Responsibilities

All involved with the selection, installation and management of Access Platform Decking systems are responsible for ensuring components from different manufacturers are not mixed to create a “cross contaminated system”, unless this use is specifically supported by each manufacturer.

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.



KEY MESSAGE

As with other Temporary Safety Systems, under no circumstances should the components from different Access Platform Decking manufacturers be mixed to create a “system”

(unless this use is specifically supported by each manufacturer and has been tested as a system)

Useful references:

- FASET APD-01 Inspection Requirements for Platform Decking
- FASET Access Platform Decking Guidance Note
- Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015

