



Counter-Balanced Edge Protection Systems

The use of systems installed on a permanent basis

This joint Guidance Note produced by the NFRC, EPF and FASET is intended to clarify what Standards and Regulations such edge protection systems should comply with.

We are frequently asked by members for clarification on the suitability of temporary edge protection systems installed on a permanent basis. Specifically, questions are raised with regards to counter-balanced and other proprietary systems that are tested to BS EN 13374: 2013+A1: 2018 Temporary edge protection systems–Product specification–Test methods.

What is a temporary edge protection system?

A system on or near an edge that provides protection against falling. In some situations, it will also contain a person sliding towards an edge during the construction phase of a building; or temporarily installed for an unscheduled or scheduled but infrequent maintenance phase of a constructed building.

What is a permanent edge protection system?

A system on or near an edge that is in place following the construction phase for the foreseeable future and provides protection for falling or sliding persons or objects. It is used for access or for scheduled and/or frequent maintenance of a constructed building.

! Further information

The Edge Protection Federation (EPF) and the Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training (FASET) produce free guidance on Temporary Edge Protection, available here:

<http://epf-uk.org/industry-guidance/>

and here:

<https://www.faset.org.uk/guidance-2/edge-protection/>

What must a counter-balanced edge protection system that is permanently installed comply with?

In the absence of a dedicated standard for permanently installed counter-balanced edge protection systems, they should be designed and installed in compliance with the National Foreword of BS EN 13374: 2013+A1: 2018 which states:

“This standard may also be used where edge protection is required for the life expectancy of the facility for the protection of persons in a strictly controlled environment, which excludes access by the general public, and where it must be demonstrated that EN 13374 loads will not be exceeded—for example, maintenance of plant and equipment on flat roofs (roofs not exceeding 10° slope) where a permit to work or means of controlled access is in place and managed strictly. In these situations, evaluation of potential wind loads must be assessed in accordance with BS EN 1991-1-4: 2005+A1: 2010 in order to demonstrate product suitability”.

BS EN 1991-1-4: 2005+A1: 2010 Eurocode 1–Actions on structures–General Actions–Wind actions gives guidance on how to predict the characteristics and impact of wind on land-based structures and their components up to 200 m high.

Manufacturer’s instruction must be adhered to in all applications including the appropriate use of toeboards.

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