

Net Worth

Debris and Weather Enclosures Can Save Contractors Time, Money

By Jay Kinder



Debris netting protects the personnel and equipment inside a scaffold, as well as people and properties nearby

Construction professionals often find themselves trying to maintain operating costs, while fully protecting their employees and the surrounding public from safety hazards. Selecting the proper debris netting or weather enclosure can help solve this challenge because the enclosures offer a large return on investment. By saving contractors both time and money, they allow the crew to remain efficient, eliminating the debris hazards and weather-related constraints that normally disrupt productivity.

What are weather and debris enclosures?

It is vital to understand the differences between weather and debris enclosures because the determining factor in the contractor's purchase is often the season in which the scaffold

is erected. While both types of enclosures significantly increase productivity, they are made for distinctly different applications. For instance, a distributor might offer various fire retardant

tarp or sheeting, because each provides scaffold workers with a high-visibility environment that also saves heating costs. The fire retardant polyethylene sheeting and tarps give contractors multiple returns on the same investment by containing heat and reducing operational costs. Still, they

benefit personnel who are fully enclosed from wind chill and precipitation, allowing them to maintain a heated environment. This advantage especially caters to employees who are curing mortar and plaster.

On the other hand, the distributor might also offer vertical debris netting for warmer weather. The netting effectively prevents sand and dust caused by sandblasting from becoming a safety hazard while supplying workers with constant air circulation. Because it allows air to pass through it, vertical debris netting can withstand heavy winds unlike some types of sheeting. It also provides a high-visibility environment. The mesh netting is normally available in a heavy-duty option too, which makes use of a tighter knit that catches even finer debris.

Therefore, the application in which the scaffold enclosure is to be used can be predicted by the external elements that will affect it.

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Time is money

Weather enclosures can increase the efficiency and profitability of a job site. Contractors are not the only people that benefit from installing enclosures and scaffold systems. Through the course of winter, a con-

Suspended Scaffold continued on page 25



Weather enclosures protect construction crews from wind chill and precipitation, allowing them to comfortably work in a heated environment through even the most inclement weather



Mesh netting prevents sand, dust and other construction debris from becoming a safety hazard, while providing constant air circulation and high visibility for work crews

struction crew can actually find itself ahead of schedule, by taking advantage of the days or even weeks that are normally lost due to inclement weather. By finishing a job early, a crew ensures that owners can open their buildings earlier than expected, thus recouping revenue ahead of schedule. This factor is especially

important in cities where many apartments are pre-rented, and often leads to a construction crew being rehired for future projects.

It is important to remember that enclosures don't just protect the personnel and equipment inside a scaffold. They also protect the daily commerce and adjacent properties around the enclosure. Because of this, it is important to select an enclosure that not only withstands the elements, but one that can also catch both the largest—and smallest—piece of debris that will fall. Consequently, the proper debris netting must have enough tensile strength and flexibility to withstand the stress caused by falling bricks or tools, coupled with wind and precipitation in inclement temperatures.

Weather and debris enclosures also can increase the morale on site. Workers who know that they are in a safe atmosphere are more productive and willing to put forth a stronger work ethic. This generally results in fewer mistakes and costly teardowns.

Options

Both weather and debris enclosures

are available with many options, allowing general contractors to find a tarp or net tailored specifically for each application, as well as the scaffold configuration they have. For instance, contractors can order tarps and netting with a flame-retardant option if they foresee a threat from sparks. Also, contractors can deter the outside public from viewing progress on a site by using high-privacy netting with a very tight knit. This is especially helpful during new construction or refurbishing for grand openings.

Many tarps and debris nettings are available now with a rope-reinforced hem and rustproof grommets. While the tarps are reinforced, they still remain lightweight, wind resistant and tangle-free. Reinforced buttonholes along the hem provide quick, trouble-free attachment, decreasing the cost due to ease of installation and the amount of time spent on maintenance. All of these features help the tarp stay vigilant against the downward, outward pressure caused by winds, rain and debris.

Wrapping Up

It is important for a general contractor to select equipment that outlasts the job his or her crew is currently working on, while making the site a safer working environment. Whether using debris netting with an open weave to allow air circulation or a weather enclosure to protect against moisture and low temperatures, contractors can maintain crew productivity and morale by protecting personnel with the proper equipment.

Having the ability to continue work, regardless of typical weather constraints gives contractors the freedom from worry and allows them to focus on running a site properly and effectively instead of having to continually stress about the safety of their staff. ■

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