

Safety Net

Choosing the right debris netting helps save lives, money and morale



By Jay Kinder

Whether they are working on the second floor of a building or sand blasting 55 stories up, the debris created from construction is a constant safety and operational concern for contractors.

Debris falls in all shapes and sizes, so it is the type and extent that predicts what steps to take in order to ensure employee and public safety. Because projects that demand the removal of brick and mortar require vastly different netting in comparison to sites that will involve large amounts of dust, choosing the correct debris netting directly affects the lives of those around it. The proper netting can also increase efficiency, as general contractors, workers and building management organizations have freedom from worrying about the possible consequences of falling debris.

What's the catch?

The "catch" to selecting the proper debris netting is knowing the various types of netting

and the benefits of each for specific jobsites. Most contractors and builders don't have the time to learn about debris netting, given all the other aspects that are required of them. All they really care about netting is that it will work. That is why partnering with the proper debris netting company is essential to choosing the right netting for each job, while also alleviating this concern for the general contractor.

Because the general contractor normally faces personnel, timeframe and scaffolding concerns, a netting supplier can play an integral role in assisting, and sometimes even educating, the buyer to determine the correct netting for each application it will surround. This will benefit both the supplier and the contractor, as it will show that the supplier has a broad enough product line to cover all applications. The contractor can also be assured of buying a product that benefits the safety and performance at a site.

Selection criteria

When choosing the proper debris netting, a contractor should account for all the considerations of the particular jobsite. This can include the type

of work being done, the weather conditions and the building's height. These considerations should be outlined to the netting supplier, so that the proper netting is selected. For example, many jobsites select netting that will protect pedestrians and traffic below, as well as adjacent properties.

In other cases, the netting must also provide rain and wind protection for the employees, while allowing enough air circulation to remain beneficial to a safe working environment.

By determining the smallest piece of debris that will fall, a netting supplier can normally arrive at enough information to help select the proper debris netting with the correct knit to catch the particular debris.

With so many factors affecting the decision, it becomes clear that the right netting must be used depending on the application it will support. This highlights the need for netting manufacturers to educate the construction supply distributor, who can consequently reassure contractors that their purchases



Having the right debris netting on the job is the contractor's responsibility, but it is the distributor's responsibility to learn and recommend the correct netting for that contractor's needs.

provide quality, reliable support in properly selected applications.

Types of debris netting

If a contractor selects the wrong debris netting, it can cause more than just the obvious problem of falling hazards. If a site is particularly windy, a very tight mesh will not allow enough wind to pass through its weave, creating a safety hazard for workers. Also, any risk of sparks will call for netting that is fire-retardant, yet will still maintain its effectiveness in all weather applications.

As mentioned, the type of work being performed will dictate the type of debris netting required. A polyethylene knitted mesh netting offers protection from fine debris and limits the sight of scaffold activity to pedestrians.

For heavier-duty protection, custom-made debris netting with a reinforced border is available.

A contractor should be able to rely on his netting supplier to help determine and provide not only a strong, lightweight debris netting suitable for the application it will border, but also the freedom from worry that will allow him to focus on the rest of his job.