

Abstract

Having 'solid ground' to walk and stand upon is among the most fundamental workplace expectations in most environments. With certain notable exceptions, workers do not consciously assess each step to ensure that the surface they are walking upon is stable enough to support them. Rather, there is a subconscious assurance that workers experience when leaving 'solid ground' to walk on stairs, ladders, ramps, elevated structures, catwalks, grating, and covers, that the surface is designed and constructed in accordance with industry standards. This manuscript details the need for organizations to recognize and adhere to the concept of *System Integrity* during routine and unplanned maintenance operations. It is paramount for supervisors and managers to have situational awareness during evolutions causing any system to be in other than a configuration it was initially designed for. Particular care must be taken to ensure new hazards are not introduced into the system inadvertently. These concepts are presented in a case study involving a workplace fatality.

Key Words

System Integrity, Maintenance Planning, Latent Hazards, Control of Work, Walking/Working Surfaces.