

Press release:

Mine walkway safety assured with 'Vital' floor gratings and handrails

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Ensuring safety is the number one concern for all mining operations. Vital Engineering understands this, and over the past few decades has produced a range of products of uncompromising quality which are now found on a growing number of mining operations throughout Africa and other parts of the world.

“When it comes to safety in mining operations, there is no room for guesswork. That is why we ensure strict material controls for our products, which results in the benefits not only of minimising lost time injuries (LTIs), but of long life-cycle and low maintenance costs,” says Dodds Pringle, Managing Director at Vital Engineering.

The company, established in 1939, specialises in a range of fully serrated, multi-directional non-slip floor gratings and stair treads, providing a durable, corrosion resistant and aesthetically pleasing solution for its customers. Under the brand name Vitagrid®, Vital Engineering's fully serrated gratings have been used extensively in large and small mining projects over many years.

“We receive positive feedback from these installations in terms of significant reductions in the number of accidents caused by slippage. This equates to a reduction in the number of employee compensation claims and the resultant downtime,” Pringle notes.

As a systems-driven and solutions-based company, Vital is not merely product-driven, or just a manufacturer or supplier. Rather, the company's decades of experience and innovation have led to the production of products which constantly meet the changing requirements of industry. A case in point is its exemplary top fixing patented grating panel clips, designed for light, medium and heavy applications.

Informed by systems design which meets specific customer requirements, Vital Engineering also prides itself on the provision of a full consultation service. Being closely involved in the design phase of a mining or construction project, the company is able to offer expert advice when it comes to material choice and design parameters, ensuring fit-for-purpose performance and maximum safety. The company cautions its customers against making ill-advised choices of material which could be solely based on price and which may compromise human safety.

“Contractors and customers need to be aware of the dangers of cutting corners with respect to quality of materials used. When engineers design walkways they do so with specific performance in mind. By replacing this with unspecified material, or sub-standard workmanship, one is courting disaster,” Pringle advises.

Vital Engineering’s precision-made pressure-forged gratings are manufactured to international standards, using the only the highest grade steel, such as WA355. Floor gratings are manufactured in mild steel, aluminium and fibreglass, with galvanised mild steel a popular choice because of its resilient and hardy finish, according to Pringle.

Vital’s Maclock® range of handrails has also been developed for safety in applications such as mine walkways, using mild steel, galvanised mild steel and stainless steel.

In addition, Vital Engineering has, in response to the general demand for ease of fitment and versatility, introduced moulded fibreglass gratings and handrails to industry, and has seen a significant uptake, particularly on mining operations.

“Fibreglass is anti-corrosive, fire-retardant, non-conductive, non-slip – and virtually maintenance free,” notes Pringle. “As a viable alternative to steel, our fibreglass stair treads, walkways and gratings – under the Vitaglass® brand name - are gaining wide acceptance due to their long-term cost-saving implications and improved safety. They are particularly suitable in harsh, outdoor or highly corrosive conditions.

Vital Engineering’s Vitex® range of expanded metal products is manufactured in galvanised mild steel, stainless steel and, if requested, more exotic materials. The company also recently launched its non-slip, serrated expanded metal walkways for conveyors and narrow, low walkways (of up to 800mm wide).

“The selection of material for handrails and gratings is a critical factor in safety, particularly when elevated such as in the context of a mine walkway. When one is 30 to 60 meters off the ground, the last thing one needs is a badly designed and constructed walkway. By making the ‘Vital’ choice, our mining customers are assured of total safety at times,” Pringle concludes.

Ends

(669 words)

Note to Editors

Since 1939 Angus McLeod and Vital Engineering have established a reputation for quality and service in the manufacture of all types of gratings, stair treads, pressed floors and safety handrails. Its brand names of Vitagrid® and Maclock® have become synonymous with versatility, quality and service.

The Group offers a wealth of product expertise and has been involved in the supply to power plants, petrochemical plants, materials handling projects, mining, process plants, food, beverage as well as most facets of the civil and structural engineering industries, both domestically and internationally.

A variety of products and materials for numerous applications are readily available, when either costs or corrosion are factors. The range includes bitumen dipped, galvanised (610g/m²) and mild steel. Other grades of materials such as SS304, SS316, structural grade aluminium and 3CR12 can also be manufactured.

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