

PRESS RELEASE

Flare-stack lagging and cladding project is a first for Skyriders

11 December 2019: Flare stacks require regular inspection and maintenance. Flare stacks are similar to smokestacks or silos, and range from 50 m to 80 m in height. Their function is to burn off surplus or dangerous excess gases that cannot be utilised or stored.

Traditionally, sizeable cranes need to be mobilised to lift the necessary equipment and personnel to the top in order to be able to carry out the work required. This has major implications for both productivity and safety.

Recently rope-access specialist [Skyriders](#) was called upon to assist a major petrochemical producer in Mpumalanga during a shutdown of a major flare stack to carry out ultrasonic (UT) wall-thickness testing, Marketing Manager **Mike Zinn** reports.

Prior to this, the five-person team was required to remove all damaged lagging and cladding, and afterwards replace it with new material. The lagging is an insulating material that is covered with a protective layer of thin steel sheeting.

“Our challenge was to ensure that our methodology was planned correctly, and that everyone in the team knew exactly what they were required to do,” Zinn explains. The fact that Skyriders was only called upon in the final days of the shutdown added an element of time pressure to the fast-track project.

“Our success here could definitely lead to additional work in this niche sector. It is a prime example of the safety and cost-savings that can result from applying rope access,” Zinn stresses. UT wall thickness measurement is a specialist inspection service offered by Skyriders, which has technicians trained specifically in this regard.

UT measurement comprises the non-destructive testing of the local thickness of a solid element such as a wall, based on the time taken by the ultrasound waves to return to the surface. This measurement is determined by an ultrasonic thickness gauge.

Ends

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Notes to the Editor

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About Skyriders

Skyriders (Pty) Ltd., established in 1998, is a leader in the South African rope access industry, providing cost- and time-saving solutions to clients in the power generation and petrochemical industries who require rope access aided inspection, NDT and maintenance work to be done in difficult to reach, high-up locations.

Skyriders Contact

Mike Zinn

Skyriders Marketing Manager

Phone: (011) 312 1418

Email: mike@ropeaccess.co.za

Web: www.ropeaccess.co.za

Media Contact

Nomvelo Buthelezi

NGAGE Public Relations

Phone: (011) 867-7763

Fax: 086 512 3352

Cell: 083 4088 911

Email: nomvelo@ngage.co.za

Web: www.ngage.co.za

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