

# Plant Practices: Fall Protection

*This article first appeared in IMPO's May 2012 issue.*

## **Cheesemaker Staves Off Future Safety Risks**

Heartland Engineered Products, in conjunction with Service Storage International, Inc. located in Willoughby, OH, supplied a substantial conveyor support structure, Mezzanine and Catwalk system to a prominent cheese supplier in the Midwest.

Critical to the mezzanine and catwalk is Safety Guard Hand Railing to protect personnel while working above and around multiple automated processes.

The entire automated system was installed to increase overall productivity and reduce the number of worker related injuries. The primary objective of the platform design is to allow easy access to the automated equipment for maintenance personnel. It allows them to work on portions of the system while still allowing other portions to run normally. This would not have been possible without the platform.

Also, by incorporating the hanging structure and maintenance platform/catwalks into a single entity, Heartland was able to reduce the overall cost of the system while giving the company better flexibility. The facility did not have the capacity to handle the additional hanging loads, and keeping the floor clear of obstructions as much as possible was a must.

With the addition of safety rails, potential future worker-related injuries will be reduced dramatically from an open type maintenance platform or catwalk.

Heartland Engineered Products Handrail is a 3 rail hand rail system constructed of 1½-inch square tubing 2-inch square uprights, spaced a maximum of 60 inches apart, designed to meet IBC code 2009. Safety Guard Handrail is used on catwalks, mezzanines, maintenance areas, stairways, and landings to protect personnel from potential falls.

*For additional information, visit [www.heartland-ep.com](http://www.heartland-ep.com) [1].*

## **Employees Stay On Guard At Precision Gears**

Ronald Vincze, quality manager of Pewaukee, WI-based Precision Gears, Inc., a manufacturer of short- and long-run, high-quality precision gears, parts, and assemblies, recently evaluated his facility with a critical eye on safety. One area that needed attention was the unprotected ledges on the loading dock in the shipping and receiving area.

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires guarding for heights above 48 inches, and after measuring the heights around his loading dock, Vincze believed it was time to look into outfitting the area with better guarding protection. In analyzing his application, Vincze knew that:

- Many people access the area.
- The area has to allow navigation for material up to 30 feet in length.
- Fork truck and overhead cranes need mobility access.
- Delivery truck drivers access the area continually.

His research led him to select Wildeck Inc., manufacturer of storing, lifting, and guarding products, to protect personnel and equipment in his loading dock. Additionally, the loading dock is also equipped with overhead crane access for flatbed trucks.

Wildeck and Capital Equipment, a local material handling distributor, worked through the application and assessed the needs of Precision Gears' loading dock. Within three days, Vincze had a quote in hand with the recommendation of several Wildeck guarding products to meet his facility's safety requirements, including:

- EdgeGard™ Folding-Rail Dock Gate.
- (3) - EdgeGard Straight-Rail Dock Gates.
- Wilgard® Guard Rail.
- (2) - Laddergard™ Safety Swing Gates.
- Custom Safety Railing.

The variety of Wildeck safety products, all of which are made of steel and manufactured at its Waukesha, WI headquarters, provided Precision Gears with complete safety coverage for all of the access points on its loading dock, while meeting the clearance requirements of the dock overhang and overhead crane. Vincze says the Wildeck guarding products are working great for Precision Gears and have helped them meet OSHA fall protection requirements.

*To learn more about Wildeck safety products, visit [www.wildeck.com](http://www.wildeck.com) [2].*

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[1] <http://www.heartland-ep.com/>

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