

# What you need to know about safety nets

FASET is the trade association and training body for the international safety net rigging and fall arrest industry. Representing the industries leading manufacturers and suppliers, it is committed to building, maintaining and expanding knowledge and best practice in the sector.



A 'collective protection system' is increasingly being specified as a primary or secondary form of fall protection for those working at height. Safety nets are used to save lives and reduce injury by catching a falling person and absorbing energy from the falling body. As such they are subject to stringent inspection and maintenance routines.

FASET co-ordinates a national network of approved and audited training centres to provide a recognised training route for anyone wishing to install, inspect and maintain safety nets, by qualifying for a FASET CSCS Safety Net Rigger Card which is now recognised as an essential qualification by site owners and operators.

## Three things you should know about safety nets

Because safety nets, when rigged, form a safety system intended to save lives and prevent injuries:-

1. Anyone involved in the design, supply and erection of safety net assemblies must be competent through experience and training. This should be achieved by working to the requirements of BS 8411: 2007.
2. The net must have been tested and shown to meet all the

requirements of BSEN 1263:1 2002, together with the recommendations within BS 8411: 2007. A label attached to the net itself must demonstrate compliance.

3. The net must be systematically and routinely maintained, inspected regularly when rigged and subjected to a thorough examination. The person carrying out this work must be competent.

A 'competent person' is someone who can demonstrate that they have sufficient professional and/or technical training, knowledge and practical experience and have the authority to carry out the work involved.

FASET members satisfy all of these criteria.

## Safety net standards

**BS/EN1263-1: 2002** - Covers safety requirements and test methods (how the net should be made)

**BS/EN1263-2: 2002** - Covers safety requirements for the positioning limits (how the net should be installed)

**BS 8411 2007** - A code of practice for safety nets on construction sites and other works that covers the specification, selection and use of safety nets and provides guidance on competency and net maintenance.

## Types of safety nets

There are two types of safety nets: knotted and knotless.



## Knotted

Knotted nets are formed by knotting cords to produce a net area. They have a set knot tension and, when they experience a fall, the knots local to the point of impact permanently tighten to absorb the energy of the fall. They are heavier than knotless nets and therefore have a steeper natural catenary (sag). This makes it harder to keep them close to the working level and often results in greater potential free fall distances than can be achieved with knotless nets.

## Knotless

Knotless nets are knitted into a pattern of voids and cross-over points to form the net. The performance of the net can be fine tuned by specifying the proportion of longitudinal threads to the proportion of external braid threads, and by changing the pitch. In this way very specific energy absorption characteristics can be set.

Both types of nets can be formed in either Diamond or Square mesh orientations. Square mesh is normally used for safety nets as it reduces the natural catenary and allows the net to be rigged closer to the working level.

## The FASET CSCS safety net rigger card

Recognised and respected as the industry standard, the FASET CSCS safety net rigger card is practice-based and meets all the latest industry requirements. Qualifying for the FASET card gives the holder a clear distinction in terms of knowledge, skills and competency - a distinction increasingly demanded by responsible site owners and managers. Properly skilled and up-to-date FASET riggers are quickly becoming the automatic choice in many countries.



Men working above a well installed square mesh knotless net

FASET training is available only from the association's authorised network of training centres. These employ expert tutors who have been assessed to have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to become FASET approved trainers.

Once someone has gained sufficient experience, they can advance to an NVQ in safety net rigging and the FASET CSCS safety net rigger qualification.

See [www.faset.org.uk](http://www.faset.org.uk) for the various pathways.

## FASET publishes definitive standards

Produced by the association's health, safety and technical committee, the standards cover the testing and repairing of fall arrest safety nets.

The first standard covers all aspects of testing including calibration of the testing machine itself, the specification and speed of the test, the permissible breaking strength and how to record the results.

The second standard covers the repairing of knotless nets. Subject to critical criteria being met - which the standard clearly sets out - the nets can be repaired for further use following damage by cutting, abrasion or hot materials.

