

GROUND PROTECTION SAFETY:

PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE AND YOUR BOTTOM LINE



STERLING

Most companies know that **safe practices** on a jobsite help protect workers and the public from injury — and protect everyone involved from legal liability and bad publicity.

But here's something not as well-known: safety best practices can also improve the bottom line. A critical but often overlooked safety area is site access, particularly ground protection matting.



Nothing matters more than the health and safety of the people out on the job. And we know that accidents related to site access also cause delays and drive up costs. Building a solid safety record helps contain costs and may even prevent increased insurance premiums.

Carter Sterling, Chief Executive Officer, Sterling

GROUND PROTECTION PROVIDERS AND SAFETY: A CRITICAL CONNECTION

True safety preparation requires examining the safety implications of every aspect of a project, including ground protection.

But not all ground protection suppliers are the same. You might find significant differences in their knowledge and commitment to safe products and practices. That's why the best way to follow recommended safety practices when using site access mats is to work with a ground protection company who operates as a true partner. A true partner shares the same interests your company has when it comes to safeguarding workers, the public, equipment, and the environment.



You'll get more value for your safety efforts if you enter a partnership with a committed provider, rather than working with a supplier focused on moving their product.

— Nathan Wade, General Manager, Midwest Access Solutions



THE SAFETY COMMUNITY

Your ground protection partner should also belong to and support organizations that collect and organize safety data. Having ongoing access to these safety insights can impact the quality and accuracy of your partner's products and consultation. For example, these respected organizations are leaders in safety training and managing safety challenges:



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A GROUND PROTECTION PARTNER

Commitment and Training

Partner commitment to safety should be top down, starting at the executive level and permeating every level of an organization. A thorough safety training program for all employees is key. In fact, at least 90 percent of workers on a jobsite should have management-level safety training including, but not limited to:

- OSHA 10/30
- First aid
- Defensive driving
- CPR
- Fire extinguisher use
- AED

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR PARTNER

SAFETY BEFORE STARTING THE PROJECT

During the partner pre-qualification phase, it is important to demand proof of the partner's safety records, including a thorough review of past events and insurance claims. This will help ensure that the ground protection partner is truly committed to safety and has taken steps to provide a safe working environment.

"There needs to be complete transparency when it comes to safety," according to Wade. "A reputable partner should be willing — even eager — to share their safety record."

Before the project begins, the ground protection partner should be willing to work closely with the project manager to identify possible onsite hazards related to jobsite access. After an audit of safety concerns is prepared, steps need to be taken to mitigate risks. These steps could include jobsite-specific signs and special colored cones strategically placed throughout the site, clearly identifying possible areas of concerns. It is essential that both overhead and underground hazards be identified and marked.

SAFETY DURING THE PROJECT

There is no such thing as too much jobsite safety. So even when the project manager has a robust set of safety responsibilities, having a strong ground protection partner can help mitigate risks further and see things others might miss.

A qualified safety coordinator, provided by the ground protection partner, should be a reliable and consistent presence on the worksite. In addition, regular safety audits should be conducted to reduce the number of audit deviations and, ultimately, the number of jobsite events.

Throughout the project, the ground protection partner should offer a weather watch program and continue to monitor the site for unidentified hazards, including incorrect setup of zone protections, cone placement, traffic control conditions, sign placement, equipment maintenance, and other hazards.



Having your partner onsite is an important part of preventing safety issues. When you're right there, you can react immediately to changing conditions.

— Joe Snorek, Safety & Compliance Manager, Sterling

REDUCE FLAGGING ACCIDENTS

Flagging can be one of the most accident-inducing activities on a project site. All measures should be taken to reduce the amount of exposure employees have to public traffic. Assessing the jobsite and choosing the proper matting product can reduce flagger exposure by making it possible to fit more mats on each truck — resulting in fewer trips overall.

It's also a good idea to ask your ground protection partner about newer or innovative matting products. Newer products on the market, such as the lighter TerraLam® 500 CLT, require fewer trips to access the jobsite, resulting in a 350 percent risk reduction for flaggers.

CHOOSE MATS CONSTRUCTED FOR SAFETY

How mats are constructed is also an important safety consideration. It's best to use mats constructed with adhesives that do not require metal fasteners that could cause tripping hazards or puncture tires. When metal bolts are required, all the nuts should be properly

countersunk beneath the surface of the timbers and ensure that any long bolts are cut flush to the surface for smoothness. When notches and lifting rods are necessary, they should be narrow and consistently placed.

**LIGHTER, SAFER
TERRALAM®
500 CLT**

**FEWER
OVERALL TRIPS**



28 TRUCKS
TerraLam®
500 CLT

56 TRUCKS
Timber Mats

**CAN LEAD TO
350%
REDUCTION**
in risk to flaggers



CONCLUSION

Good safety practices do far more than protect workers and the public. They can lower project costs by reducing delays and, over time, help prevent insurance premiums from increasing. Proper mat selection, installation, and communication with your ground protection partner all play an important role in project safety. By working with a ground protection partner truly committed to safety, onsite events can be avoided and everyone will benefit.

ABOUT STERLING

Sterling is a leading provider of innovative site access solutions for companies that build our nation's energy infrastructure. We are America's largest manufacturer of CLT (cross-laminated timber) site access mats. Our TerraLam® CLT is an engineered matting solution that saves time and money, protects the environment, and ensures worker safety. TerraLam is manufactured on state-of-the-art automated equipment at our Illinois and Texas facilities for maximum consistency and quality. Our innovative matting products, combined with expert consultation and an array of turnkey services, deliver exceptional value on any size project and lay the groundwork for your success.

CONTACT US

STERLING

501 E. 151st Street
Phoenix, Illinois 60426
(708) 388-2223
sterlingsolutions.com

