**PRESS RELEASE**

Comprehensive training courses ensure that workers become ‘Height Wise’

*Industry-leading fall arrest and rope access training courses available through Height Wise Training Academy ensures that all businesses employing staff members working at more than two metres above ground are fully-compliant with Occupational Health and Safety laws.*

**26 May 2011:** Fall arrest training is essential to the day-to-day safety of all workers in South Africa who are carrying out tasks more than two metres above the ground, according to leading height safety consulting and training provider, Height Wise Training Academy.

Height Wise was established in 2007 and is a subsidiary of Skyriders - a market-leader in the provision of expert rope access aided inspection, non-destructive testing (NDT) and high-elevation safety solutions, which also boasts a zero-fatality record throughout its 22-year history.

Height Wise director **Penny Fabricius** highlights the fact that this stringent law is enforced by the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) of 1993. “A considerable amount of workers in South Africa are exposed to varying degrees of work at height, and it is the responsibility of the employer under the OHSA to ensure that all employees obtain basic, yet life-saving skills, for the work environment.”

Fabricius points out that Height Wise has to date trained more than 1 200 people from numerous industries including mining, telecommunications and the energy sectors of Africa in the basic principles of fall arrest systems, which are all compliant with the Institute for Work at Height (IWH) and National Qualifications Framework (NFQ) standards.

“The IWH was formed as a result of the merger between the Specialised Manufacturers Association (SAEMA) and the Rope Access and Fall Arrest Association (RAFAA), and is currently working with the Department of Labour to establish a professional body for the work at height sector of South Africa,” she continues. “By providing training courses that are IWH-approved, Height Wise is providing trainees with the peace-of-mind that they are receiving the highest-quality of standards in safety training.”

Height Wise Academy offers two fall arrest training courses, namely:
Level 1: A basic one-day course which ensures legal compliance at height, Level 1 fall arrest training provides learners with a general fall arrest principles and practices.
Level 2: An advanced two-day course which enables the trainee to conduct rescue at height. It is recommended for supervisors in charge of technicians working at height.

Fabricius notes that Height Wise provides training at its academy in Midrand; however, the company encourages all clients to undertake training onsite. “Height Wise is committed to providing all training onsite, as it is more cost-effective for the client but more importantly, it provides trainees with a hands-on approach to learning essential safety skills in a ‘real-life’ environment.”

In addition to fall arrest training, Fabricius notes that Height Wise also offers more advanced rope access training to both private and corporate clients. “Rope access is far more advanced than fall arrest, and equips trainees with the necessary skills to undertake rope access aided inspection, non-destructive testing and various maintenance tasks in difficult-to-reach and high-up locations.” she continues.

Fabricius points out that being a freelance rope access technician is a viable occupation in Africa, where skilled and qualified trainees can earn more than R1 500-per-day. She does; however, admit that extensive training must first be undertaken. This includes:

Level 1: Enables the trainee to perform a limited range of rope access tasks and rescues. In order to move from a Level 1 to a Level 2 rope access technician, the trainee must complete a minimum of 750 logged working hours.

Level 2: Trainees completing Level 2 will be provided with a Height Wise certificate, which qualifies them to manage the safety of personnel working at height. A minimum of 1 000 working hours must be logged to qualify for Level 3 training.

Level 3: This is the highest level of rope access training and all supervisors are required to be Level 3 qualified. This enables them to supervise rope access teams, and to perform advanced manoeuvres and rescues onsite.

“Rope access training is complex and demanding, and the OHSA states that only persons 18 years and older, who are both medically and psychologically-fit, can qualify for the intensive training,” says Fabricius. “Trainees who meet these criteria are then provided with world-class training from expert rope access technicians employed by Skyriders, who have extensive experience in various industries across Africa.”

Height Wise is among the few training academies in Africa that provides IWS and NFQ-accredited training courses; however, Fabricius admits that it is a challenge to highlight the vital importance of this nationally-recognised qualification. “Most corporations are aware of the need for safety training at height, but many are unaware of the different levels of qualifications. Height Wise distinguishes itself from the competition, as the company subscribes to the highest standards imposed by the IWS, while many other training providers merely subscribe to their own in-house standards, which are not necessarily recognised nationwide.”

Looking to the future, Fabricius notes that the rapid development of industries across Africa serves as a potential platform for growth. “As industries continue to expand, so too will the demand for safety training. Height Wise has distinguished itself as a reputable leader in providing at height safety solutions training, and I believe that the company is in prime position to gain significant market share, and to establish new training academies across the continent,” she concludes.

***Ends***

**Notes to the Editor**There are numerous photographs specific to this press release. Please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the Skyriders link.

**About Height Wise**Height Wise Training Academy was established during 2007 to coincide with the development of NQF Unit Standards for rope access and fall arrest, which have been accepted and published by SAQA (South African Qualifications Authority). Height Wise received Service SETA accreditation (Provider accreditation number 2439) and is able to deliver high quality training and assessment for NFQ accredited or customised course in height safety.

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