

# Fiercely contested MBA North construction safety competition gets underway

The 2021 Master Builders Association (MBA) North Annual Regional Safety Competition is now underway. The competition, hosted by MBA North and sponsor Federated Employers Mutual Assurance Company (FEM), has been held annually for over 40 years to improve safety in the construction industry.



Image source: Gallo/Getty

“Not only are participants improving their safety audit outcomes year on year, they are also successfully implementing all the Covid-19 safety protocols introduced last year,” says Gerhard Roets, construction health and safety manager at MBA North. “Most companies appointed Covid-19 compliance officers and placed protocols immediately on being allowed to resume work last year. The protocols are part of the competition audit, and we foresee that this checklist will be part of the audit for many years to come.”



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## Strong field of competitors this year

The competition provides a platform from which companies can benchmark their health and safety management systems and implementation against other companies in the region as well as nationally. The event, which saw a decline in participants last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, has attracted a strong field of competitors this year, with 60 having entered. In 2019, there were 54 entries, dropping to 23 during the lockdown.

With entries heading back up to normal levels, this year also sees ten new companies participating: Bantry Construction Services, Bartlett Construction, CKJ Building Construction, Grinaker-LTA, Anastasi Projects, Washirika 3 Oaks, KBAC Flooring, Abbeydale Building and Civils, J.C. Van Der Linde and Venter Projects and ENZA Construction. Says Roets: “We welcome the new participants to the competition – it is always good to see new arrivals, taking health and safety on site as

seriously as we do. The growth in participation is an indication that the competition is healthy across the region.”



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## Competition categories

The safety competition is so fiercely contested that some participants request a five-star grading audit in order to improve their performance, and several companies have more than one project entered to compete internally. In addition to recognising the top three placings across ten categories, the MBA North Construction Health and Safety (CHS) Regional Safety Awards on 14 July will also recognise outstanding sub-contractors and best performing individuals. These individuals, nominated by their companies, are recognised in categories including Health and Safety Client Agent, Construction Manager, Health and Safety Manager, Health and Safety Officer, Construction Supervisor, Yard Manager, Health and Safety Representative and Supplier. “Winning an individual award is a huge honour and good for the winners’ careers,” says Roets.

The winning teams will go on to compete against the winners from six other regions in the Master Builders South Africa (MBSA) National Safety Competition from July to August this year.

“Health and safety on sites remains a top concern for the construction sector, and the seriousness with which participants compete in it reflects this,” Roets says.



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30 Mar 2021



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## 24 fatalities recorded in 2020

Despite a slowdown in work last year due to lockdowns, FEM recorded 24 fatalities in 2020 for the MBA North region. Nine were due to motor vehicle accidents, eight were ‘struck by’ incidents, five were the result of falls, three due to inhalation, absorption or ingestion, and one due to slip or over exertion. According to FEM, a total of 2,480 accidents occurred in the sector in 2020, at an average cost per accident of R59,275 and a total of 12,419 lost days. These accidents resulted in 215 permanent disabilities not resulting in pension, and nine resulting in pension. Herman Enoch of FEM concludes, “Almost all accidents reported can be prevented. We need to continuously practice good health and safety wherever we are. We support competitions like the MBA North regional initiatives as these are aimed at accident prevention.”

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