

Customization vs. Fabrication

3 Safety Compliance Myths that Are Killing Your Bottom Line

Lean/agile manufacturing training has helped numerous plants respond quickly and proactively to frequent and rapid changes. Despite the top and bottom line benefits of lean/agile training, it's surprising how many plants continue to operate as though it were still the 1980s and 90s when it comes to safety compliance for crossover stairs and platforms. This paper uncovers three commonly held myths about industrial crossovers and crossover stairs that not only waste time, but also people and financial resources.

MYTH #1: CUSTOM FABRICATED CROSSOVERS REPRESENT A QUICK FIX

In a recent survey of manufacturers, we estimated as much as two weeks' engineering time before fabrication can begin. Engineering time includes design, preparation of CAD drawings and verifying each crossover application to [OSHA Standards](#). Then, allow another four weeks for fabrication, assuming they don't have a backlog and they're very responsive.

Custom fabrication is neither agile nor lean. In order to achieve agility, the solution itself would have to become lean as well as the process for specifying and obtaining a safe, compliant crossover system. Look for modular, turnkey systems pre-engineered, drawn and OSHA compliant, saving weeks in prep time and delivery.

Instead of spending time drawing the solutions, plant engineers should have the capability to configure a solution from modular components in far less time than it takes to design a solution from scratch. More importantly, an agile solution is available for immediate shipment, cutting weeks from the conventional fabrication process.

MYTH #2: THE LOCAL JOB SHOP CAN FABRICATE CROSS-OVER PLATFORMS AND STAIRS MORE COST EFFECTIVELY

Avoid considering initial cost, which at face value may appear to be economical. After investigating numerous custom fabrication applications, we found that on average, approximately \$4,000 in engineering costs were necessary to ensure safety compliance.

When you consider the number of times plant engineers must respond to changes in the manufacturing footprint, costs quickly escalate. Add to that the cost of ongoing maintenance for painted steel fabricated crossover platforms, and the total cost of ownership can really skyrocket.

Most custom fabrications are single use or temporary solutions. In today's lean, agile manufacturing environments, the focus is on reducing waste, making single use systems, though necessary, a source of waste. In agile environments, crossover platforms, stairs and rails are modular and reusable, leveraging your investment further and avoiding wasted engineering and disposal costs.

ErectAStep Enables Fast, Safe Access for Shurtape® Workers

When Hickory, N.C.-based manufacturer of pressure-sensitive tapes needed access to a silo surrounded by a containment wall, they selected ErectAStep for a fast, easy crossover solution.

"The catalog is so self explanatory that we spec'd it in 30 minutes and placed the order," said Matt Moore, engineering manager, Shurtape Technologies.

He explained that his team had built a number of ladders by hand, which is a long process. ErectAStep ships same day and comes with everything needed to properly install the stairs, rails and crossovers.

"Putting this together was a breath of fresh air," he said. "Everything went smoothly. We had it built in two hours and had it ready to go a couple of hours after that," he added.

Moore said he would recommend ErectAStep because it's easy to configure, order and assemble; plus, the order arrived in a few days.



MYTH #3: WE DON'T HAVE THE RESOURCES TO INSTALL A CROSSOVER SYSTEM

A lean process ensures optimum resource allocation. When it comes to crossover platforms and stairs, plants that use a local job shop often find they're forced to allocate more engineering resources at a premium cost. In some cases, heavily welded fabricated systems require more costly logistics to deliver and install.

Applying lean principles to upstream design and configuration saves downstream time and contains costs. For example, a preconfigured crossover system, which simply bolts together with common tools, can be erected in a few hours by a plant maintenance worker under the supervision of a plant engineer.

As plants become leaner, allocating the right resources is essential to maintaining flow. However, suppliers must understand lean practices and develop solutions that support their lean manufacturing customers.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND LEAN PRINCIPLES ENABLE COMPLIANT COST-EFFECTIVE INDUSTRIAL CROSSOVER SOLUTIONS

The pace of manufacturing continues to accelerate. Changes that once involved weeks of preparation are now expected in days. And with limited people and financial resources plants must find solutions that support and enable lean principles without compromising worker safety or risking non-compliance.

Innovative design and advanced robotics and laser technologies, along with lean principles, have enabled more agile and compliant solutions to employee access in industrial settings. We've built engineering and compliance rules into every component saving weeks of engineering time and talent. As a result, your crossover system is easy to configure and ready to ship same day. Plus every system is reusable, so your investment goes a lot further.

Download our Infographic "[Safety made simple](#)" and see for yourself how you can obtain custom crossover and stairs in just one day instead of 30 days.



About the Author

Grantt Clemmer is the National Sales Manager for ERECTA STEP. The company is a leader in manufacturing industrial safety systems. Their systems deliver fall protection in and safe access to challenging work areas while also driving productivity and bottom line savings. A 15-year sales veteran, Grantt has been with ERECTA STEP since its inception four years ago. Grantt and his sales team have helped leading manufacturers ensure industrial safety and support OSHA compliance. Some of the industries include agriculture, chemicals, consumer packaged goods, food, pharmaceutical, pulp & paper, water treatment and more. He can be reached at grantt@erectastep.com.

About ERECTA STEP

Save time and eliminate costly engineering and fabrication with a unique ability to re-purpose with ease. The ERECTA STEP® modular crossover system is simple - choose from a combination of the 5 components all which simply bolt together. All components are precision manufactured, fully engineered and OSHA compliant. And as always - each component is fully stocked and ready to ship today!

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