

Northern Strands

Exceeding expectations for over 45 years

By Tonya Lambert

For over 45 years, Northern Strands in Saskatoon has been helping mining and construction companies to grow their businesses, safely and efficiently.

Northern Strands' company motto is 'exceed their expectations' and they are constantly developing new ways to do just that. This past year alone, they have become the exclusive North American distributor of the world-renowned Becorit synthetic liners, have launched a new rigging testing program, established distributors across the province and have purchased the province's first under-bridge access hydra platform.

Quality questions

Northern Strands' commitment to its clients begins the minute you walk in their door or contact their office. Every member of staff is trained in rigging so they can help you to find the right tool or piece of equipment to meet your unique needs.

Owner Garry Clarke explains, "If you were to phone us and ask for some rigging, basically we would start asking you questions and interviewing you. We would ask where you're working and what type of things you do. In some cases, we would even ask to come out and see the site so we could ensure you were getting exactly what you needed."

The Becorit synthetic liners are a good example of the quality for which Northern Strands is known. These sheave liners are a high-end dependable product that are easy to work with. The Mining Ropes & Attachments Division is continually searching for the highest quality products for their customers.

If the company doesn't have the equipment you need, they will find it. And if it doesn't exist, they will design and build it. Together with its affiliate companies, Fortis and Certified, Northern Strands employs a wide range of experts who embrace challenges and will brainstorm everything from customized rigging and lift plans to new types of equipment.

Safety first

In keeping with the company's motto, 'exceed their expectations', Northern Strands offers an extensive variety of programs and services designed to keep your workers safe and your operation flowing smoothly.

Safety is everyone's responsibility at Northern Strands and is a key value across the Fall Protection Division as they work with customers to eliminate or manage the risks associated with working at heights.



Sinking bucket.

In addition, Northern Strands' Training Division has several courses that create better worker awareness on the jobsite. Some of the more popular courses include Fall Arrest, Crosby Rigging, Tugger Safety, Emergency Responder, Wirelock Socketing, and First Aid/CPR-C. Each course is offered regularly at Northern Strands, but companies also have the option of requesting on-site training for their employees. Such individualized sessions can be arranged for any time – days, evenings, nights, or weekends – anywhere in North America.

"If you want to do mine shaft training, we will go in your mine shaft," states Clarke. "If you want to go underground, we'll go underground. If you want to go in a grain elevator, we'll do that, too. This way the training really means something to your employees because we are in their own work environment."

Tested & true

Well-maintained equipment goes hand-in-hand with worker awareness when it comes to safety. For several years now, Northern Strands has been running a chain and lever hoist exchange program whereby they will give you a discount on your purchase of a new chain or lever hoist when you bring in your used hoist.

"We don't care what kind of hoist it is," says Clarke. "What is important is getting that old equipment out of the mix because when those old mechanical devices [hoists] fail, it can be disastrous."

In addition, Northern Strands, a COR- and ISNET-certified company, now offers mobile rigging demonstrations. Using a mobile test bed built by their affiliate company Fortis, Northern Strands will conduct on-site testing demonstrations of your rigging equipment. Clarke says people are often surprised at just how much of a difference a seemingly small deficiency, such as a tiny tear, mineral coating or improper usage can make. The rope or sling can no longer handle anywhere close to the amount of weight or force that it was designed to manage. This testing really emphasizes the necessity of proper maintenance, correct usage, and when you should replace your rigging.

Access granted

Northern Strands recently acquired a Hydra Platform HP 32. This under-bridge access platform makes construction work safer and swifter by reducing inspection, maintenance and repair down times, as well as decreasing the amount of lane shutdown on bridge traffic. Northern Strands will be using it to carry out its own inspections, as well as renting it out to other companies to use.

"Northern Strands has a suspended access division, which is like our limousine service," explains Clarke. "It gets you to where you want to go, whether it's to the top of a building, down in a mine shaft, or underneath a bridge. Where you need to get to, we provide the access to that, as well as providing the training if you want to do it on your own."



Chase block and pins.



Suspended access hydra platform.

Expanding availability

Over the last five months, Northern Strands has established nine distributorship locations across the province. These distributors provide access to rigging products in geographical locations distant from the company's offices in Saskatoon and Regina. Northern Strands supports its distributors by offering the same technical expertise they would offer to a client purchasing direct. As Clarke states, "We support our distributors, who in turn, support their customers. It's a win-win for everyone."

Northern Strands' commitment to the safety and well-being of the people of this province and beyond encompasses much more than its training courses and test beds. The company was a major sponsor of the 2016 Saskatchewan Health & Safety Leadership Charter Event and Mission: Zero Awards, and is a charter member of the organization. Northern Strands also supports many local charities, events and sports teams, including the Children's Wish Foundation, the Agrium Delisle Rodeo, and the Vimy Dinner for wounded veterans.

Let Northern Strands help you to exceed your expectations. Their excellent sales, service and support are geared to ensure your safety and success. ♦

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