

industry news



### Rope access team repairs coronal capping of smoke stack

Following prolonged exposure to regular lightning strikes that caused structural damage to the tip of a 106 m-high smoke stack at a copper mine in Phalaborwa, leading rope access specialist Skyriders was contracted to complete the repair work.

Skyriders' Mike Zinn explained that a team of five rope access specialists

successfully repaired the steel lightning protection capping on the top of the structure, which protects the top of the smoke stack, within eight days during May this year.

"With issues like lightning strikes, high winds, thermal variations and the velocity of the exhaust gases from the stack, the capping can become misaligned. Our task was to realign

the various stainless steel components before welding it to a belt to secure it safely. The biggest challenge was accurately welding the steel at such height. However, this obstacle was easily overcome as the Skyriders team boasts in-depth skills and experience in this regard," commented Zinn.

Given the ongoing success at this project, and many similar ones located across Africa, Zinn is optimistic of the future outlook for Skyriders.

"Rope access is a safer and more cost-effective alternative to the more traditional means of access on tall structures, as it applies practical rope work to enable workers to access difficult-to-reach locations with greater ease. This has made rope access increasingly popular in numerous industries, including mining," he concluded. [acr](#)