

The Net under the Bridge



The Golden Gate Bridge spans the Golden Gate strait, the one-mile-wide, three-mile-long channel between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean.

The bridge is one of the most internationally recognized symbols of San Francisco, and has been declared one of the Wonders of the Modern World. Construction began in

1933 and the structure opened in 1937. The cost was more than \$35 million.

Construction of the bridge was so risky that newspaper reports dubbed it “Dance of Danger.” Workers on top of swaying catwalks and high towers, sometimes hundreds of feet in the air, would be blown by powerful winds. Predictions were that for every \$1 million spent, one life would be lost.

Engineers, however, believed that the risks could be lowered. When construction got under way, numerous safety measures were put into place and strictly enforced. These included mandatory use of hard hats and prescription filtered eyeglasses, implementation of a no-showboating policy (which was cause for automatic firing), use of tie-off lines, and establishment of an on-site hospital – factors that greatly reduced the casualty rate.

The most effective safety device, without question, was the use of a “trapeze net.” This large net, costing \$130,000, was draped 60 feet below the roadbed under construction, extending 10 feet to either side. This net caught so many falling workers that newspapers began running box scores on the total number of lives saved.



Of 11 men killed from falls during construction, 10 died as the bridge was nearing completion when the net failed under the stress of a scaffold that had fallen. Two out of the 12 workers involved survived the 200-foot fall into the icy waters, including the 37-year-old foreman, Slim Lambert. Nineteen others who were saved by the net over the course of construction became proud members of their Halfway to Hell Club.

Beyond that, the net freed many of the workers from an often-paralyzing sense of fear, which helped them work more productively.

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The story underscores the importance of a feeling of safety and security in what we do, and that includes the workplaces of Life Care and Century Park.

First and foremost, our residents and their families must be confident that those we serve reside in a building and in an environment that are safe, and in which they can feel content and happy.

But it is also vitally important that our associates also understand that their personal safety is among the highest of priorities, not only for the assurance of their own well-being, but also because their full attention can be given to their job responsibilities and optimum productivity.

Peace be within your walls and security within your towers (Psalm 122:7 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter