

***Press release:***

***A first in South Africa: Dekra IOL's virtual reality platform makes working at heights training safe and effective***

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After 18 months in the making, the Dekra Institute of Learning (IOL) is proud to announce that its working at heights training course on a virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) platform is live – with its PC-based 3D e-learning being a first in South Africa. This innovative course was developed and designed in partnership with software company Virtutec.

Dennis Vaden, Chief Operational Officer of Virtutec clarifies: “While there are other AR and VR training courses in existence, we believe that the programme’s ability to offer a 3D e-learning module which is PC-based for multiple corporate users is a first in South Africa – something of which we are justifiably proud! The working at heights training programme is also applicable to individuals as well as corporates.”

Christopher Mörsner, Head of the Training Division at Dekra IOL, explains: “Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries across many sectors, including in the engineering, construction, mining and industrial environments. ‘Work at height’ means work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, an employee could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury or even death.

To put a lighter spin on a very serious topic, we have created a Dekra IOL VR training course, which is interactive and informative, and offers the user the effect of being on a construction site. It is important to note that the training course is also SETA-accredited. I believe that learning is especially effective when it is fun, and this training course enables anyone to learn about working at heights in a way that is firstly safe, and secondly entertaining. It equips the individual to go into the field armed with knowledge that has been previously instilled, safely yet effectively.”

Mörsner notes that the training programme is useful across multiple industries, and is available on the Dekra learner management system for anyone who wants to do working at heights training, whether for the first time, or as a refresher course.

Vaden adds: “ This virtual reality training course is extremely realistic and gives the effect of being on a construction site, allowing the user to feel as though they are walking and moving around, across multiple height levels. A very useful functionality is that, while the content stays the same, the background can change, allowing for the creation of various different scenarios - so that the VR programme can be customised to meet a specific client’s needs.

This is especially useful for corporate clients, which can scale it for up to hundreds of users, who are then able to engage in self-paced learning. The look-and-feel can also be customised to allow corporates to showcase their preferred virtual look-and-feel background and branding.”

Mörsner adds: “While this functionality will be appreciated by our corporate clients, it facilitates the required learning for their employees as well. This is because many adults prefer to learn in an environment in which they feel comfortable. The VR training programme can facilitate this in two ways: firstly, by allowing them to learn in a physical environment that they are familiar with - for example their own day-to-day company work premises. Secondly, by customising the virtual learning surrounds so that this becomes a virtual copy of a working at heights environment which learners know in real life.”

The training programme operates according to self-paced learning, and it can be accessed using both virtual reality headsets as well as through a laptop.

“A facilitator can be available to assist and support if required,” explains Vaden, “but essentially the learning is all self-paced. The individual doesn’t have to complete all the learning at once – the programme remembers where you are, and the multiple modules can be carried out over time to suit your time availability.

“While performing activities at heights it is important to remember that there is always a risk of fall injuries - and certified and expert training is an important part of an employer’s responsibility in facilitating their employees’ safety,” notes Mörsner.

“I am grateful to our Dekra employees, who tested the platform vigorously and gave their feedback. Dekra IOL, in partnership with Virtutec, is proud to present a fun, safe and informative digital way for anyone to learn about working at heights – using this excellent technology,” he concludes.

**(715 words)**

## **About Dekra Industrial and Dekra Institute of Learning**

With 97 years in the industry through its global parent company, Dekra Industrial SA has established a formidable reputation as a leader in inspection services, non-destructive testing (NDT), material testing, laboratory services, Advanced NDT, and asset integrity services, and offers industry training through Dekra Institute of Learning. With a Group presence in more than 50 countries on five continents, Dekra Industrial RSA provides safety solutions across a multitude of industries, including power generation, oil and gas, construction, petrochemical, manufacturing, fabrication, pulp and paper, rail, mining, steel industry and foundries, within South Africa and pan-Africa.

Dekra Industrial SA is a holistic, '*one-stop*' services provider of NDT inspection, corrosion control with rope access, lifting and drone inspections, Dekra Industrial SA is Level 3 BBBEE-compliant, with 51 percent black woman ownership.

The company is also RD 0034-compliant, a nuclear safety compliance standard and is one of the few NDT companies locally to hold the ISO 45001 certification.

Dekra Institute of Learning is QCTO-accredited and delivers online learning across all industries, in both public and private sectors, with training pitched to all levels of competency, focusing on HSE, ISO and CPD-aligned courses. Classroom-based and distance learning are also available.

Dekra Industrial strives to be recognised as the 'heroes of safety'.

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