

## Shea Celebrates Safety in Seaside

Qualifying for Cal/OSHA’s Voluntary Protection Program is a coveted achievement, one that’s difficult to attain and in many cases, harder to maintain. In the case of Shea Homes, which recently qualified for VPP-Construction at its Enclave residential project in Seaside, Monterey County, the achievement goes even further.



*The Enclave project in Seaside includes 30 high-end homes with views of Monterey Bay.*

“It’s a model for other construction sites,” says Gary McIver, CSP, senior safety engineer for Cal/OSHA Consultation and a member of the VPP-C team that evaluated the Enclave project. “It’s leading edge, tip of the spear on a couple of things.”

Enclave is a high-end residential project with views of Monterey Bay adjacent to the Bayonet & Black Horse Golf Club. The new homes – 30 in all – start at \$2 million, and some will sell for double that. Shea didn’t spare expense on safety in getting the houses built.

Two of the biggest safety issues were fall protection under the new six-foot rule for residential construction and safely cutting roof tiles to prevent silica exposure.

“The framing was a big deal,” McIver tells *Cal-OSHA Reporter*. “This was right at the beginning” of the switch to a six-foot trigger instead of 15 feet, at the behest of Fed-OSHA. The revisions to Construction Safety Orders §1716.2 became effective on July 1st, 2025. “We had a lot of meetings with the framers and the other trades that you wouldn’t think would be involved, because of the planning, timing and delivery, and to change techniques. They’ve really figured it out, and they’ve not stopped trying to make it work.”

Jason Ryan, construction manager for Shea Homes, says the main technique to meet the six-foot rule has been to use scaffolding. “We’re putting scaffolding up as we build, as opposed to the old way. We used to build it all the way to the roof sheeting. Now

we’re using it at every level that we go up, keeping track of the possibility of falling. We have 42 inches [of scaffolding] always inside and out. We leaned a lot on the scaffolding.”

McIver notes that the interior of each house in Enclave is unique, so each one has its own fall protection plan. “You couldn’t come up with something and blueprint it everywhere. This required constant coordination, exterior and interior. They were using collapsible scaffolds; they were sometimes using ladders, and then sometimes they were putting pieces of the trusses together in such a way that they could tie off to that.”

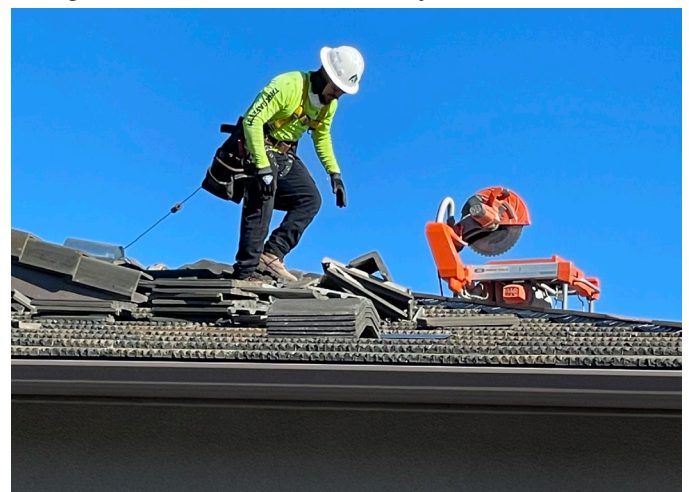
### ‘Living It’

Jennifer Blake, Shea’s safety and environmental compliance manager, notes, “The standard requires us to look at every single elevation.” She singles out several subcontractors for their efforts to comply with the contentious standard. “We couldn’t have navigated that six-foot fall-protection boomerang that got thrown our way without you guys,” she said at the VPP-C celebration. “We’re living it and breathing it every day.”



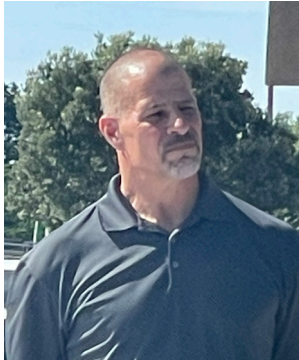
*Jennifer Blake, safety and environmental compliance manager, Shea Homes.*

She tells *Cal-OSHA Reporter* that planning for fall protection began in January 2025 with the framing, roofing, and scaffolding trade partners, as well as the Cal/VPP-C team and Robert Pinney, a loss prevention consultant with **Liberty Mutual Insur-**



*A worker prepares to cut tiles on an Enclave roof with an iQ saw, which allows dry cutting of tiles.*

ance. “Our initial discussions were critical to develop alignment on the exterior and interior fall hazards,” leading to detailed planning and scheduling. “Experimentation began immediately as our trade partners became early adopters of the new regulation, and we began pulling in the truss company and other trade partners to ensure alignment was still the spirit of this change.”



**Jason Ryan, Shea's construction manager.**

Consultation site visits became working sessions, and Ryan, the operations team, and the subcontractors “worked tirelessly to take the learning lessons from these meetings and apply them to the schedule,” Blake says.

The primary techniques, Blake says, included elevated pole anchor systems with scaffold brackets, scaffolding set in stages and at the 45-inch guardrail height, and scheduling and ordering trusses so that they could be installed first, blocked and braced, then used as anchor points.

The project used eight-foot “lean-safe” ladders and extension ladders, as well. “We all thought the ladder usage and consequently the ladder risk would increase dramatically,” she observes, “however, now looking back it remained about the same.” She lauds framing contractors Portola Construction and Capitol Builders, and Greystone Plastering for their strong “cross-trade collaboration, paired with a willingness to listen and try.” Their efforts were “essential to our success,” Blake says.

**“We couldn’t have navigated that six-foot fall protection boomerang that got thrown our way without” the efforts of trade partners.**  
— Jennifer Blake

As for the argument during the lead-up to the six-foot rule that ladders are inherently unsafe, she replies, “The same argument could be made for nail guns. “We just need to train the employees, inspect the equipment, and use our tools safely.”

McIver notes that meeting the fall protection challenge

“took a lot of time, effort and resources on [Shea’s] part, but they were completely committed to it.” Section 1716.2 requires that employers demonstrate that conventional fall protection is not feasible before using alternatives. “They showed that it was feasible, even with a lot of extra time and energy. They have really gone above and beyond. They are the standard right now.”



**Gary McIver, Cal/OSHA Consultation.**

Cal/OSHA Consultation’s McIver also remarks that

complying with the standard requires significant equipment, but “you learn that you can use that later on other jobs,” calling the outlay a one-time cost. He acknowledges that the six-foot rule has been “rather contentious” in California. “It’s really hard when someone tells you to do something different that you’ve never done before, if you want to keep putting food on your table. We did training, we met with them, we collaborated and then Shea just took the ball, and they worked with their subcontractors. And they grew from it.”

## A Cut Above

Another major achievement of the project was successfully dry-cutting roof tiles without exposing workers to silica dust. In many cases, roof tiles must be cut to fit while working on roofs. Wet cutting on a roof is not feasible because it creates a slip hazard; the challenge is to cut it dry without releasing silica.

The answer is the iQ Saw, manufactured by **iQ Power Tools**, based in Perris. The saws are equipped with a vacuum to evacuate silica below the saw blade before it’s released. “They [followed] the construction silica standard,” McIver says. Shea coordinated with its roofing contractor to get the saws in place, and our team monitored the cutting. We helped them kind of refine that. We did testing here that I’m not aware has ever been done in California. You can cut it dry on the roof if you use the right tools and the right training.”

Patrick Corcoran, another member of the VPP-C team, adds, “We’re very proud of the cooperation that we received”



**Employers, employees and Cal/OSHA officials help celebrate the presentation of the VPP flag at the Seaside project.**

on this job site” on the silica issue. “We did a lot of work with companies. I think we’ll take that information and move it around the state to the other job sites we go to, and I’m sure they will, too.”

McIver agrees. “Our hope is that it affects the industry, that everyone else realizes that it’s a possibility and it’s feasible. But unless you commit to it like Shea has, plan ahead, work as a team with the subs and take all that knowledge and energy and apply, then you’re going to say it’s not feasible. I’m here to tell you, you can do it.”



*Fall protection is provided from the ground up on at the Enclave project.*

### ‘Honorable Mention’

McIver says another safety innovation at the project was to accommodate fall protection anchorage into the structures themselves. “There are lot of balconies on these nice houses, and we ran into a situation where we had to work together,” he says. Shea collaborated with the trades to determine the tasks that needed to be done and the best way to protect the employees. “In fact, they built fall protection into the design of the house on the balconies so that all the crews that came through had a place to tie off.”

**“I’m so proud of this job I can’t even put it in words.”**

**– Gary McIver**

Ryan explains: “We encountered a gray area in the design, which required us to develop a structurally engineered backing system within the floor. This system allows each trade to supply and install its own fall-protection anchor. It was engineered to support up to three employees working simultaneously on our second-floor decks.” Ryan adds, “This solution has since become a model we can apply to all similar plans across our national operations.”

Carl Paganelli, Division of Occupational Safety and Health deputy chief for consultation, process safety management, and engineering services, notes that there are “hundreds and hundreds of big construction projects in California, but very few get VPP-C status. It’s not just a stack of checklists, it’s something that you do every day to keep yourselves and your workers safe.”

Consultation Service Manager Gene Glendening adds that he has “the ‘wonderful’ role of turning down [employers] that apply for VPP-C,” but Shea “had it together before they even got submitted.” He calls the residential contractor “cutting edge, especially on silica and fall protection.”

Seven trade partners qualified for Consultation’s Golden Gate Partnership Program for their effective Injury and Illness Prevention Programs, as pictured accompanying this story.

McIver comments, “I’m so proud of this job that I can’t even put it in words.”



*Golden Gate award, Paradise Electrical: Left to right, Claudia Marcogliese, Consultation; Jennifer Blake, Cristal Hermosillo, Daniel Barone, Carlos Hernandez, Omar Lopez, Jose Vega, Abraham Zarate, Sergio Zarate (Paradise) and Gary McIver, Consultation.*



*Golden Gate, Thorpe Design: Dave Holler and Sergio Lopez.*



*Golden Gate, ILG, Inc.: Michael Servino, Abel Gonzalez, Manuel Estigoy, Eduardo Gomez, Dago Angulo and Ivan Naranjo.*



*Golden Gate, MGM Drywall: Alexis Trevino, Efrin Madrigal and Pedro Reyes.*



*Golden Gate, WMA Landscape Construction: Katie Carey, Heriberto Perez, Silvino Chavez and Bill Ayers.*



*Golden Gate, Greystone Plastering: Mike Stonehocker.*



*Golden Gate, J.W. Peterson Painting: Martin Santiago and Victor Diaz.*

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