May 2022

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Fall Prevention – Lanyards for Fall Arrest Systems – Do’s and Don’ts

A lanyard is obviously an extremely important part of a fall arrest or fall prevention system. So here are a few safety tips related to the selection, use, and care of your fall protection lanyard:

Make sure the lanyard you select for the job is made from the right material for the job you will be performing. While a lanyard made of rope or synthetic materials are okay for many jobs, they may not be suitable for use if you are performing work around sharp-edged materials that could cause cuts, or if you are welding or torch cutting, as the heat and sparks generated could cause damage to the lanyard. Conversely, a wire cable lanyard, which might be more suitable for use around sharp-edged materials or heat and spark-producing operations, would not be okay to use if you are working around live electrical conductors.

Ensure the lanyard you are using is the right length for the job. The shorter the lanyard, the better, as a shorter lanyard will reduce your total free fall distance. And that helps reduce the shock load, or jolt, generated and transferred to your body when you hit the end of the lanyard.

When using a lanyard with a shock-absorbing pouch, be sure the end of the lanyard with the pouch is attached to your body harness D-ring. This helps make sure the deceleration device can fully deploy if the lanyard should get hung on something when you fall.

Keep control of the loose end of the lanyard when you are not connected to an anchor point. Many injuries occur when a worker trips over the loose end of their own lanyard while walking around. And in other cases, workers have been injured because the loose end of their lanyard gets tangled up with a nearby moving object, such as a rotating pulley or a load being moved by material handling equipment. Always keep

the loose end of the lanyard in your hand if making a short commute or attach the loose end of the lanyard to a designated attachment point on your body harness during longer periods.

Never, for any reason, tie a knot in a lanyard. Doing so actually reduces the strength of the lanyard, in some cases by almost 50 percent! And if you find that your lanyard was accidentally knotted while being stored, untie the knot before using the lanyard.

Finally, avoid storing your lanyard where it could be damaged by exposure to chemicals, direct sunlight and high heat, and sharp materials that could cause cuts or punctures. And be sure to inspect your lanyard for damage of any type before each use, and immediately get a replacement if damage is discovered.

Fall Protection - Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace

Fall Protection – Preventing Slips, trips, and falls in the Workplace

Diligence in identifying and avoiding hazards is the key to avoiding falls. Here are a few things we can do to eliminate, or at least, minimize slips, trips, and falls in the workplace.

- Take immediate action when you see any type of foreign material on the floor, especially liquids, food, dusts, or powders, as these could reduce friction when we step on them. Either clean up the material right away or take positive measures to warn others of their presence while you contact staff responsible for cleaning up such hazards.

- Always make it a point to wipe your feet on mats or rugs that have been placed near exterior doorways and other passageways to collect excessive moisture from the soles of shoes or boots as we walk from a wet environment to a dry environment.

- Report any loose rugs or mats that seem to move or slide as you walk across them, as their non-skid backing may have become worn or loose.

- Always take advantage of using handrails every time you go up or down stairways, as they can help you maintain balance and avoid falling if you should happen to slip.

- Always make a conscience effort to pay special attention where floor surfaces transition from one type of material to another, as changes in friction often occur at these areas

- Do not place extension cords, hoses, or similar items across designated walking paths. Or, if doing so on a temporary basis is unavoidable, be certain to make the hazard highly visible by placing safety cones or other effective warning devices to alert others of its presence until it can be removed.

- Same thing goes for setting bags, boxes, tools, or other items in designated walking areas, even temporarily. Instead, place such items on counters or appropriate storage areas.

- Be on the lookout for any damaged flooring surfaces, such as broken or missing tiles, broken concrete, or edges of carpet that have come loose from the floor. If you do see such a hazard, take immediate steps to alert others, and then report it to your supervisor so it can be repaired.

- Always pre-survey areas where you will be walking while carrying any large object, such as a box, that could block your view, so you can relocate any tripping hazards beforehand.

- Always keep a firm grip with one hand on a handrail when ascending stairs. That will give you something to hold on should you catch the toe of your shoe or boot on the edge of a step. Of course, you should hold the handrail when descending stairs, too.

- Avoid walking in areas where there is little or no light. It is too easy to trip on or over something if you cannot see it in the dark. Take the time to make sure the overhead lights are turned on, if available, and if not, use a flashlight or other portable light source to help you see. Report burned out lightbulbs, too.

- Lastly, avoid walking backwards. It is very easy to trip backwards over something on the floor that you cannot see. And it’s harder to recover your balance if you do happen to trip.

Fall Prevention - Fall Arrest Full Body Harnesses - Do's and Don'ts

Fall Prevention – Fall Arrest Full Body Harnesses – Do’s and Don’ts

Falls from one level to another are among the leading causes of severe injuries and death among workers in the United States. Many workers who were injured or killed were wearing a full body harness as part of a personal fall arrest system, but their full body harness was not properly worn or adjusted, and it failed to work. So today we will review some important tips to remember when you wear a full body harness:

Only wear a body harness that a Competent Person has determined to be the right size for your body. Wearing a harness that is too big subjects you to injuries caused by straps that are improperly positioned, or you might even slip out of your harness and fall. Conversely, wearing a harness that is too small is very uncomfortable, tempting you to loosen or unhook buckles, which could lead to failure of the harness to arrest your fall.

When adjusting your full body fall arrest harness, make certain that the D-ring on back, where your lanyard attaches, is centered evenly between your shoulder blades.

Also make sure the chest strap in front is properly positioned across your chest and snug. If it is positioned too low or too loose, your body could be thrust forward when you hit the end of your lanyard during a fall, causing you to roll forward and out of your harness. Conversely, the chest strap could be yanked up into your throat if it is positioned too high on your chest. Also, adjust your shoulder straps to fit snugly so they don’t slip off.

Always make sure the leg straps are positioned properly, below your buttocks.

Take the time to confirm that every buckle on your harness is properly adjusted and fully engaged, and that any loose ends of straps are tucked into retainers when

provided. Leaving just one buckle loose or unbuckled could lead to failure of the harness to safely arrest your fall.

When properly adjusted, you should only be able to fit two fingers of your flat hand between your body and the straps on your harness.

Finally, every time you put on your full body harness, make certain that it is ALL the way on, connected, and properly adjusted, and leave it that way until you are ready to take it ALL the way off. That is because if you loosen or disconnect any part of your harness for even a short time, such as at a rest break or lunch, you might forget to make needed readjustments or reattachments when you are ready to resume work.