

## **The ABC's of Personal Fall Arrest Systems**

Falls are the leading cause of deaths in the construction industry. Most fatalities occur when employees fall from open sided floors and through floor openings. Falls from as little as 4 to 6 feet can cause serious lost time accidents and even death. If an employee can fall six feet or more onto a lower level, a fall protection system must be provided.

Sound Bite - Trevor Osborn , Jobsite Supply

“It’s important because it’s the one thing that’s going to save your life in the end. There’s a lot of situations that people could, if they were wore the proper stuff in the first place, they wouldn’t have been hurt, they could of walked away from it and gone back to their families. But they didn’t because it took too much time to put on, they just didn’t want to mess with it, it was in their way and they didn’t go back to their families that day.”

This video will focus on the ABC's of Personal Fall Arrest Systems. A stands for Anchorage point – a secure point of attachment that supports the entire weight of the system. B stands for Body Support – A Harness worn by workers performing the job. And the C stands for a Connecting Device – which attaches a harness to an anchor point.

Sound Bite - Trevor Osborn , Jobsite Supply

“We are now going to show you how to properly put on a harness: Hold the dorsal D-ring of the harness and shake to allow all straps to fall into place. Make certain the straps are not buckled or twisted. Next step is to put your shoulders through. The dorsal D-ring will be located on your back, while the chest strap is located in the front. Straps must not be tangled as the harness hangs free from the shoulders. Next, put one leg strap between your leg and connect to the opposite end of the same side. Complete the second leg strap. Next, tighten the belt. Next, adjust the torso strap. Then fasten the chest strap just above the nipple line. Chest strap should be snug, with excess straps secured through the web keepers. A good rule of thumb to check to make sure everything fits right for the leg straps is to put three fingers into the leg straps. Slide your palm into the chest straps and make a fist. If you can pull your fist out with slight resistance, it is on correctly. That is the proper way to put on a harness.”

The competent person must make frequent and regular inspections, as required, to determine if these systems meet OSHA requirements before employees rely on these systems.

Sound Bite - Trevor Osborn , Jobsite Supply

“Every harness that a company owns needs to have a record showing its annual inspection. That includes a serial number, date of manufacture and the manufactures name.”

A Fall Protection System is needed when a person can fall 6 ft or more.

This includes working from:

- Walkways, stairs, and Ramps
- Leading Edges
- Holes
- Concrete Forms And Rebar
- Excavations
- Roofs
- Wall Openings
- Bricklaying
- Residential Construction

Sound Bite- Steve Dean, Ryland Homes

“The residential standard is changing. For a long time, we have been always able to work to under an alternative fall protection program which enabled the residential industry to look at the fall protection needs specific to us and have different methods of achieving fall protection. Because there have been so many advances in technology over the years as far as harnesses, as far as anchorage, as far as attachment points on roofs, the standard is getting put back to what it was and what it is for everyone.”

Sound Bite - Trevor Osborn , Jobsite Supply

“If you’re the typical worker working up there and you are having trouble finding a place to tie of at, you are going to need to stop and take a look at that with your safety director to figure out how to do it. There is no way around it. You are going to have to have an anchor point.”

When determining proper anchorage point height, please not the following:

When using a 6ft shock absorbing lanyard and a full body harness, first add the length of the lanyard (6ft) to the maximum elongation of the shock absorber during deceleration (3.5 ft) to the average height of a worker (6ft)

Then add a safety factor of 3ft to allow for the possibility of an improperly fitting harness, a taller than average person, and/or a miscalculation of potential fall distance.

The total equals 18.5ft. This is the suggested safe fall clearance distance, the height at which you must attach to an anchorage point to minimize the risk of contact with a lower level. This is why it is important to tie off as high overhead as possible. If there is not enough room below the work surface to accommodate a potential fall, use other equipment such as a fall limiter.

Sound Bite - Trevor Osborn , Jobsite Supply

“In the end, no matter how uncomfortable it is, no matter how un-cool it looks, a harness at the end of the day will save your life.”

Employers are required to provide training prior to working at elevations. The training is to teach you how to recognize hazards and how to minimize them. It must also cover fall hazards, fall protection systems, and the correct use of fall protection devices.

Sound Bite- Steve Dean, Ryland Homes

“If you see and if you look at the demonstrations and you see how lanyards really work to save you as a person. I think that’s probably the most important take away. How not to just put a harness on, but how to put the harness on correctly. I think that’s probably the biggest take away of the day. To say, hey this thing isn’t going to hinder me from doing my job, this is going to save my life.”