TOOLBOX TALK

Fall Protection and Harness Safety

Topic	Fall Protection and Harness Safety	Attendees	0

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT

A harness only saves your life if it fits, it is clipped to the right anchor, and someone can get you down quickly. A badly fitted harness or a lanyard that is too long can let you hit the ground anyway. This talk is about getting all three right every time.

1. Check your harness before every use: webbing, stitching, buckles, D-rings, labels and the fall indicator. If it has arrested a fall, take it out of service.

2. Harnesses and lanyards need a formal inspection by a competent person at least every 6 months, or as the manufacturer says. No tag, no use.

3. Fit it snug: back D-ring between the shoulder blades, chest strap across the middle of the chest, leg straps flat with a flat hand fitting underneath.

4. Use an anchor rated for at least 22 kN (5,000 lb) per worker, or one designed by a professional engineer. Pipes, handrails and conduit are not anchors.

5. Guardrails come first. Fall restraint or fall arrest is used only where a guardrail is not practicable.

6. Work out your fall clearance: lanyard length, shock absorber stretch, your height and a safety margin. On low work, a standard lanyard can let you hit the ground. Use a self retracting lifeline.

7. Rig it so you cannot free fall more than about 1.8 m (6 feet), and check the system before every use.

8. Anchor overhead where you can. Clipping below your feet means a longer fall and a harder stop.

9. Watch for swing falls. If your anchor is off to one side, a fall will swing you into walls, columns or the ground.

10. Keep lanyards away from sharp edges and use leading edge rated gear where the line runs over an edge.

11. Use one connector per anchor point unless it is rated for more, and never tie knots in a lanyard or wrap it around a beam and clip it back on itself.

12. Restraint is better than arrest: set it up so you cannot reach the edge at all.

13. Someone hanging in a harness can lose consciousness within minutes from suspension trauma. The rescue plan and gear must be on site before work starts.

14. A phone call is not a rescue plan. Aim to have a fallen worker down within about six minutes, with the rescue kit and trained people close by.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CREW

1. Show me where your D-ring and chest strap should sit.

2. What anchor points on this job are rated, and how do we know?

3. If someone fell and was hanging right now, what would we do in the first five minutes?

4. When was your harness last formally inspected?

5. How much clearance is below the work we are doing today, and is it enough for your lanyard?

Reference: Provincial OHS regulations, for example Ontario Reg. 213/91 s.26 and BC OHS Regulation Part 11

RUN BY

	Name	Signature	Date	
Presenter				

ATTENDANCE

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Keep this record with your site safety file.