

SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

Fall Protection: Beyond the Harness

Falls are the leading cause of preventable worker deaths in construction each year.

When working from heights, employers must plan projects to ensure that the job is done safely. Begin by deciding how the job will be done, what tasks will be involved, and what safety equipment may be needed to complete each task.

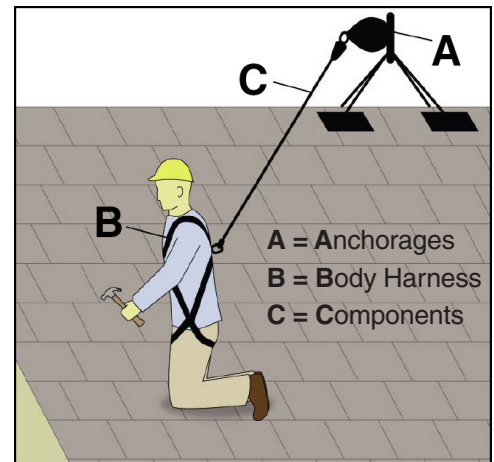
When estimating the cost of a job, employers should include safety equipment, and plan to have all the necessary equipment and tools available at the construction site. For example, in a roofing job, think about all of the different fall hazards, such as holes or skylights and leading edges, then plan and select fall protection suitable to that work, such as personal fall arrest systems (PFAS).

TRAIN everyone to use the equipment safely:

Every worker should be trained on proper set-up and safe use of equipment they use on the job. When employers choose to use a personal fall arrest system as a means of worker fall protection they must:

- Limit the maximum arresting force on a worker to 1,800 pounds when used with a body harness. 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(16)(ii).
- Be rigged so that a worker can neither free fall more than 6 feet nor contact any lower level. 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(16)(iii).
- Bring a worker to a complete stop and limit the maximum deceleration distance a worker travels to 3.5 feet. 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(16)(iv).
- Have sufficient strength to withstand twice the potential impact energy of a worker free falling a distance of 6 feet or the free fall distance permitted by the system, whichever is less. 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(16)(v).
- Be inspected prior to each use for wear, damage, and other deterioration. Defective components must be removed from service. 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(21).

Know the A, B, Cs of Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAS)



Components may include connectors such as snap hooks or D-rings, connection points, lanyards, deceleration devices, lifelines, or other components.

OSHA requires the use of fall protection when construction workers are working at heights of 6 feet or greater above a lower level. It applies at heights of less than 6 feet when working near dangerous equipment, for example, working over machinery with open drive belts, pulleys or gears, or open vats of degreasing agents or acid.

Workers who are six feet or more above lower levels are at risk for serious injury or death if they should fall. To protect these workers, employers must provide fall protection and the right equipment for the job. Use the right ladder or scaffold to get the job done safely. For roof work, if workers use personal fall arrest systems (PFAS), provide a harness for each worker who needs to tie off to the anchor. Make sure the PFAS fits, and regularly inspect it for safe use.



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