

Frequently Asked Questions About Fall Protection

Is there an expiration date for my harness and lanyard?

The service life of fall protection equipment is typically 5 years unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer. This applies only to product with no visual damage and that has not been exposed to chemicals, abnormal heat, or excessive UV light. The user is required to inspect their harness before each use, and their company must document an annual inspection. It is the responsibility of the end-user to determine when a harness or lanyard is unfit for use.



Is fall protection equipment from different manufacturers compatible?

Individual products can be interchanged, but when a product is sold as a system, the component parts are tested as a system and are not interchangeable.

Am I required to be tied off when using a portable ladder?

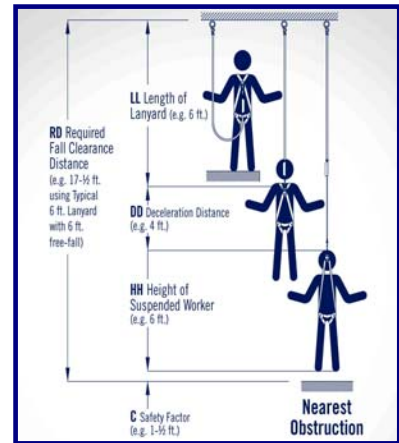
Not when working on portable ladders. However, when workers climb a permanently-mounted ladder that is 20 feet or more, they must be protected by a ladder cage or personal fall arrest system.

At what height am I required to wear fall protection?

The fall protection trigger height is 6 feet in construction, 4 feet in general industry, 10 feet for scaffolding, and 15 feet for steel erection.

What is the maximum free-fall distance a worker can fall while working in a “fall arrest” condition?

The worker can free-fall a maximum of “6 feet” and not come in contact with any obstruction or lower level.



Can I write on my harness and lanyard?

The “Sharpie” brand felt tip marking pen uses a type of permanent ink that will not cause deterioration to nylon and polyester webbing. Markings should be made on a non-load bearing strap, if possible.



What are the new fall protection requirements for residential construction?

Workers engaged in residential roofing construction activities 6 feet or more above the lower level shall be protected by guardrail systems, safety net systems, or a personal fall protection system. Essentially, roofing contractors must comply with the same standards as everyone else, including the use of alternative measures such as controlled access zones, covers, positioning devices, warning lines, and or warning line and safety monitor system, but these alternative measures are not applicable on most sloped roofs.



How much strength does my anchor have to support?

Anchorage used for attachment of personal fall arrest equipment must be capable of supporting “5,000 pounds” per employee attached.

What are the penalties for violating an OSHA standard?

The maximum OSHA penalty is \$7,000 for each serious violation and \$70,000 for a repeated or willful violation.



Can I “tie-back” a lanyard into itself?

Manufacturers do not recommend wrapping a lanyard into itself unless it is specifically designed for that connection. When a qualified anchorage connector is not available, a tie-back lanyard acts as both a connecting means and an anchorage connector. The webbing is generally rated higher and the snap hook is rated at 5,000 lbs. rather than the standard 3,600 lbs.



Does my self-retracting lifeline need to be recertified every year?

No. It is required that the end-user inspects the self-retracting lifeline before each use and documents an annual inspection. The self-retracting lifeline will be required to be re-certified based on the following conditions:

- a. It has recognized the load of a fallen worker
- b. The load indicator has been revealed
- c. The snap hook is inoperable
- d. The cable or webbing has excessive wear or kinks
- e. The cable or webbing does not engage when tested or does not release

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