Fall Protection

Week Number 29 (July 16 - 22) 2017 Edition

Falls from elevations are one of the leading causes of traumatic occupational death, accounting for eight percent of occupational fatalities from trauma. A fall from 12 feet takes only one second and has an impact velocity of 20 miles per hour. OSHA requires that when any person is working at a height of six feet or more, action must be taken to prevent, restrain, or arrest a fall. This applies to floor openings, walls/roofs, leading edges, ramps, formwork, hoistways, and excavations.

Listed below are different types of fall safety equipment and their recommended usage.

Class 1: Body belts (single or double D-ring) are designed to restrain a person in a hazardous work position and to reduce the possibility of falls. They should not be used when fall potential exists; positioning only.

Class 2: Chest har nesses are used when there are only limited fall hazards (no vertical free fall hazard), or for retrieving persons such as removal of persons from a tank or a bin.

Class 3: Full body harnesses are designed to arrest the most sever e free falls.

Class 4: Suspension belts are independent work supports used to suspend a worker, such as boatswain’s chairs or raising or lowering harnesses.

Cable Positioning Lanyards: Designed for corrosive or excess heat environments and must be used in conjunction with shock absorbing devices.

Shock Absorbers: When used, the fall arresting force will be greatly reduced if a fall occurs.

Rope Grabs: A deceleration device which travels on a lifeline, used to safely ascend or descend ladders or sloped surfaces and automatically, by friction, engages the lifeline and locks so as to arrest the fall of an employee.

Retractable Lifeline Systems: Gives fall protection and mobility to the user when working at heights or in areas where there is a danger of falling.

Safety Nets: Can be used to lessen the fall exposure when working where temporary floor s and scaffolds are not used and the fall distance exceeds 25 feet.

Rail Systems: When climbing a ladder, rail systems can be used on any fixed ladder as well as curved surfaces as a reliable method of fall prevention.

Each type of fall protection is regulated by federal standards. Make sure to follow these regulations when setting up and using fall protection on the job. If you don’t know the regulations, ask a supervisor to find out.