



## **Fall Protection – Are you Using it Correctly?**

Wearing fall protection is useless if you're wearing it incorrectly. So how are you supposed to know whether you're wearing it correctly or not? There are several resources available to you to ensure that you are protecting yourself from the hazards of falls.

First, you have the manufacturer's guidelines, recommendations, and instructions. You should never just throw on a new fall protection device and hope for the best or attempt to figure it out as you go along. That's kind of like throwing yourself off a building and hoping there's something there to save you in the end. Take time to read all the information and get answers to all the questions you might have about the equipment.

For instance, you should be able to answer the following questions: Are there any visible defects? Are all the snap hooks working properly? Do they require a double movement to open and close? Will the components prevent accidental roll-out from occurring? Is all the stitching intact? Does the harness fit properly? Is the chest connection damaged? Is the lanyard damaged? Is it too short? Is it too long?

Another way to make sure you're using your gear correctly is to attend a fall protection training class. Many equipment manufacturers and suppliers offer this type of training at no cost. They will often come to the jobsite to hold a training session. There's no better place to learn about the gear than the jobsite—and nobody is better at training you than the manufacturer of the fall protection gear. Check to see if your employer offers fall prevention training courses. Find out the schedule and be sure to attend.

One additional way to know whether you're using your gear correctly is to ask your co-workers. Check each other's fall protection gear before you start work. Ask your supervisor where fall protection is required on the job. You can also talk to your foreman or supervisor about where you're going to tie off. Make sure the anchorage point meets the load requirements and has been approved.

Remember the ABCs of fall arrest systems:

- A is for anchorage. An anchorage is a secure point of attachment for a fall arrest system. An anchorage should be able to support 5,000 pounds.
- B is for body support. A full body harness provides a connection point on the worker for the personal fall arrest system.
- C is for connectors. Connectors are devices that connect the full body harness to an anchor system— these include the lanyard, snap hooks, lifeline, etc.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

**Get all the training available so you can look out for yourself and your co-workers. Say something if you notice others using fall protection gear incorrectly or ineffectively.**