

FALL PROTECTION HARNESS: MAKING SURE IT WILL WORK FOR YOU

If your fall protection harness is damaged, missing components it came with from the manufacturer, or is not put on and adjusted correctly – it (with you in it) could get tangled up in moving pieces of other equipment or fail to protect you while experiencing a fall. Either way, the outcome for you could be disaster.

BEFORE putting on a fall protection harness – every time – it is important to make sure all components of the fall protection system are in place and in good condition. If not, don't put it on and notify the manufacturer to see if it can be repaired or should be discarded. Think of your fall protection harness the same way skydivers think about their parachutes.

1. Instructions

Manufacturer's instructions are legible and easy to reference. Read thoroughly before first putting on any harness. Check manufacturer guidance on specific timetables or inspection points for your harness.

2. Labeling

Present, legible and in good condition.

3. Impact indicators

Have not been deployed; deployment often shows as a bright color or a tear in the stitching. Located at center back of the harness.

4. Hardware

(D-rings, grommets, buckles, etc.)

No rust, deformations, bends or cracks, alterations or other damage. Buckles connect and adjust as manufactured, D-ring pivots freely up and down.



5. Lanyard keepers

No sign of damages, burns, tears, etc.

6. Webbing

No sign of damages, burns, tears, fraying or sun/chemical damage.

7. Leg and chest straps

No sign of damage to straps – including over-stretching, chemical burns, cuts, sun damage, welding burns, etc.

Steps to putting on a fall protection harness

1. Straighten out and inspect harness before putting it on; use the checklist above or checklist provided by manufacturer. (Always put on harness before getting up to jobsite to avoid loose materials / straps being caught in machinery, creating trip hazards, etc.)
2. Put the harness on and adjust shoulder straps to fit securely and snug so they don't fall off your shoulders.
3. Adjust each leg strap to fit around your leg.
4. Connect and adjust the leg straps. Check for proper connection by tugging on connection points. Leg straps should be tighter than chest strap but not uncomfortable. Tighten enough to slide an entire hand under each strap, then ball hand into a fist and try sliding fist back through. A proper fit is one where your fist cannot slide back through strap. Straps should be located just below the buttocks once tightened. Tuck in any loose straps.
5. Connect and adjust the chest strap. Check for proper connection by tugging on connection point, tighten strap so that it's tight enough for your hand to fit flat under the strap and turn outward, so from flat against your body to perpendicular.
6. Inspect and adjust D-ring if necessary; it should be resting between shoulder blades. Ask a teammate to do a visual check!