

# Who Uses Fall Arrest Equipment?

There is never a time that fall arrest equipment is not mandatory for operators of suspended stages.

29 CFR 1926.500-503 Subpart M addresses the responsibility those of us who work in this industry have to use "Fall Arrest" equipment. There are many descriptions within the code to outline when this equipment is mandatory. The basic answer is that fall arrest equipment is mandatory whenever an employee can be exposed to a fall hazard of six feet or greater. Fall Arrest equipment is always mandatory on suspended staging.

29 CFR 1926.501(a)(1) Subpart M states that it is the responsibility of "employers to provide fall protection systems," and that "All fall protection required by this section shall conform to the criteria set forth in 1926.502 of this subpart."

Who actually provides the gear may be unclear at the moment, it is however very clear that it is mandatory. Most employers willingly provide this equipment to their employees although their biggest responsibility is to make sure that it is used.

The reason people die in swing stage accidents is failure to wear properly attached fall arrest equipment. The deceased often have harnesses on when they hit the ground, but it was not being used with a lanyard and rope grab. Later on in the investigation the reason for why they have not hooked up is learned, "We only had a little bit of work left."

Whether you have two minutes of work to do or ten hours, there is no excuse not to wear your fall arrest equipment. Harnesses are not fashion items, they are life saving equipment. They can only save you if they are properly worn and used as part of a properly planned fall arrest protection system.

## What's At Stake

Take a moment and consider what is at stake if you have a serious accident. All of us have families that we want to spend time with and that want to spend time with us. If we were to have a fatal accident at work, all of that is lost forever.

Many of us have kids that we want to play baseball with, take camping, fishing, hunting and go to their school plays. I want to walk my daughters down the aisle when they get married. I carry them on my back around the house and sometimes when we are out and they are tired of walking. Paraplegics can't do this.

If you survive a serious fall from a suspended scaffold the result will be life changing. Ask your self this, "Do I have a close friend that is willing to take my kids camping, fishing, or walk them down the aisle at their wedding?" Then ask yourself this question, "Is that really what I want?" It might not be the same for you, and maybe your friends are willing to help out so that your kids won't miss much. The real truth is that your kids and family will miss out on so much!

Surviving a fall could mean that your family would have to take care of you in ways you never imagined.

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There are no second chances at the moment you fall from heights, only the sudden stop. That sudden stop is a sudden stop to your life and everyone else that you care for and who cares for you.

Learn about your fall arrest system and use it! It only takes a few minutes to properly hook up your equipment. If your employer provides you with fall arrest equipment, **USE IT!** If your employer does not provide you with fall arrest equipment, buy it and **USE IT!** Fall arrest protection is mandatory on suspended scaffolds **ALWAYS**. The prospect of not using this equipment could significantly change your life and everyone else's that is close to you. Even walking the dog will never be the same after a serious fall. Be safe out there. Never work without your fall arrest equipment, not for a second, and not for a lifetime.

## Did You Know?

- The lack of and improper use of fall arrest equipment is one the most often cited OSHA violations annually.
- When you visit [www.powerclimber.com](http://www.powerclimber.com) you can click on links that take you over to the OSHA and SIA websites.
- Some commonly asked questions about fall arrest equipment can be found with their answers on the OSHA website, [http://www.osha-slc.gov/Publications/Const\\_Res\\_Man/1926m\\_interps.html](http://www.osha-slc.gov/Publications/Const_Res_Man/1926m_interps.html)
- More than one lanyard cannot be hooked together to allow greater movement on the platform.
- Not all fall arrest equipment is compatible with other equipment. It is not acceptable to use a lanyard of any type with a self-retracting lifeline between your harness D-Ring and the retractable lifeline. This could result in additional free fall distance that was not designed into the system.

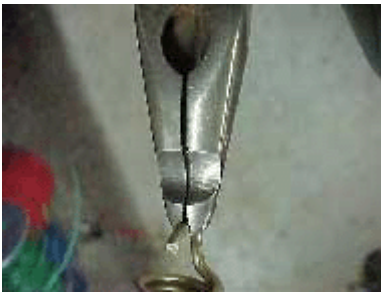
## Tips and Tricks

- Make sure to include a special section on your rental contracts that makes your customer aware that fall arrest equipment is mandatory on suspended scaffolds. Have your customer sign or initial this section.
- The screws on contactors periodically loosen over time due to vibration from running and transport. Make sure that you tighten all screws down on electrical components to minimize arcing and the effects of arcing. This could help minimize contactor replacements over time.
- Dean Besaw of Suspended Stages, Inc. in Rexdale, Ontario created this special tool from some needle nose pliers to help install and remove the reeving spring in the Astro 85 Series hoists.



Topic of Interest

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For questions or comments, contact Customer Service at 1-800-560-CLIMB (2546) or [customerservice@safeworks.com](mailto:customerservice@safeworks.com).

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