Harness toolbox talk: safety harness inspection

29 CFR 1926.502, 1910.140

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

When you last put on your harness, did you look at the webbing, the stitching and the hardware first?

Why it matters

Your harness is the one piece of gear that has to work the first time you fall. A cut strap, a bent buckle or a cracked D-ring will not show up until it is too late. A quick check before each use is how you find the problem on the ground instead of in the air.

Key points

1. **Inspect it before every use**
   Personal fall arrest systems must be inspected before each use for wear, damage and other deterioration, and defective components must be removed from service (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(21)). In general industry, the check is before initial use during each workshift for mildew, wear, damage and other deterioration (29 CFR 1910.140(c)(18)). Do it every time, even when the harness is new.
   29 CFR 1926.502(d)(21)

2. **What to look at on the harness**
   Run the straps through your hands. Look for cuts, frays, burns, melted or glazed spots, chemical stains, stiff or hard areas and mildew. Check the stitching for pulled or broken threads. Check the buckles and the D-ring for cracks, bends, rust and sharp edges. Read the label and make sure it is still readable. Check any energy absorber for signs it has been used.

3. **Check the lanyard and connectors**
   Look over the lanyard, lifeline, anchorage connector and snaphooks the same way. In general industry, snaphooks and carabiners must be the automatic locking type that need at least two separate, consecutive movements to open (29 CFR 1910.140(c)(9)). Make sure each connector closes and locks, and that it is the right size for what it connects to.
   29 CFR 1910.140(c)(9)

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4 Wear it right

Snug the leg and chest straps and keep the webbing flat. In construction, the attachment point of a body harness must be in the center of your back near shoulder level, or above your head (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17)). Harnesses and components are for employee protection only, not for hoisting materials (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(18)).

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17)

5 After a fall, pull it from service

A personal fall arrest system or component that has been loaded by a fall must be removed from service right away. It cannot be used again until a competent person inspects it and decides it is undamaged and suitable for reuse (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(19)). If a harness is damaged, tag it out and tell your supervisor. Do not fix it yourself.

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(19)

6 Have a rescue plan

The employer must provide for prompt rescue of employees in the event of a fall, or make sure they can rescue themselves (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20)). Hanging in a harness can be dangerous, so know who will call for help and how the person will be brought down before anyone goes up.

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20)

Scenario

Picture this: A worker grabs a harness from the back of a truck on a hot, dusty morning. The shoulder strap is stiff and shiny in one spot, and the leg strap buckle feels loose. The crew is behind schedule and the roof is waiting, so he figures it looks fine and clips in. A coworker notices him adjusting the buckle. What should have happened before he climbed?

Crew discussion

1. Where do we store harnesses, and how do we protect them from sun, chemicals and sharp edges?
2. Who removes a damaged harness from service on this job?
3. What is our plan to rescue someone hanging in a harness?
4. What would make you stop and swap your harness before climbing?

Bottom line **Check your harness every time you wear it, and if you have any doubt, pull it from service.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema: Safety harness inspection / Inspección del arnés de seguridad

Date / Fecha: _____

Trainer / Instructor: _____ Location / Lugar: _____ Company / Empresa: _____

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