Toolbox talk

Working at heights

Harness fit, anchors, 100% tie-off, ladders, scaffolds and open edges.

Most falls happen when a basic step gets rushed or skipped. This talk covers harness checks, anchors and tie-off, ladders and scaffolds, and keeping people back from open edges.

Key point **Stay tied off 100% of the time, to an anchor that can hold the fall.**

Harness inspection and fit

A harness only works if it's in good shape and worn right. Before any work at height, check the stitching, webbing, D-rings, buckles and labels for cuts, wear or heat damage. Any harness that fails the check comes out of service on the spot.

Fit it snug. Chest strap at mid-chest. Leg straps tight enough that a flat hand fits under them but a fist doesn't. Back D-ring centered between the shoulder blades. ANSI Z359 covers the details.

Anchors and 100% tie-off

The best harness in the world does nothing without a good anchor. OSHA requires an anchor that holds at least 5,000 pounds per person tied off, or one designed, installed and used under a qualified person's supervision as part of a complete system with a safety factor of at least two (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15)). Don't tie off to guardrails, conduit, scaffold frames or anything not built for fall arrest.

Stay tied off 100% of the time. Don't unhook from one point until you're hooked to the next.

Ladders, scaffolds and access

People fall getting to the work as well as doing it. Set ladders on stable ground, tie them off at the top and use the 4-to-1 angle. Keep three points of contact and don't climb with heavy tools in your hands.

Scaffolds need full planking and guardrails, and a competent person inspects them every day before use.

Edges, holes and guardrails

Guardrails, warning lines and controlled access zones keep people away from edges. Where a guardrail is in place, it's the first choice of fall protection. When one is missing, damaged or taken down for the work, the risk jumps.

Cover or guard holes, skylights and open edges as soon as you find them, and keep the area below clear of people in case something drops.

Ask the crew

1. When did you last check your harness, and what did you look for?
2. What's our anchor today, and how do we know it's good for 5,000 pounds?
3. Where are the open edges and holes on this deck right now?

Crew sign-in

Working at heights

Date _____ **Site or project** _____

Presented by _____ **Company** _____

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Signing means you attended this talk and had the chance to ask questions.