

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FALL PROTECTION

## **What's the difference between polyester and nylon webbing in harnesses and lanyards?**

Nylon (polyamide) and polyester are both synthetic products with very consistent performance properties required for fall protection. Polyester's great advantage is that it is resistant to more chemical compounds and resists UV degradation better than polyamide.

## **Can I "tie back" my lanyard to itself?**

Werner Fall Protection will not recommend wrapping a lanyard back into itself unless it is specifically designed for that connection. Even though the gate strength on all Werner lanyards meet the new ANSI standard of 3,600 pounds, the practice of wrapping back will not be accepted.

## **Can I write on my harness/lanyard?**

The Sharpie® brand felt tip marking pen uses a type of permanent ink that will not cause deterioration to nylon and polyester webbing. We would recommend marking on a non-load bearing strap if possible.

## **Can I use a shock absorbing lanyard for restraint applications?**

Yes. A worker can use a shock absorbing lanyard in fall arrest and restraint conditions. In restraint, it will not be possible to generate enough force to activate the shock absorber. Please note: A worker may not use a non-shock absorbing lanyard in a fall arrest application but may use it in restraint.

### **Is there an expiration date for my harness and lanyard?**

ANSI A10.32-2004 states that the service life of fall protection equipment manufactured of synthetic fiber shall be 5 years unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer. This is stated as a general guideline. This guideline only applies to product that exhibits no visual damage and that has not been exposed to chemicals, abnormal heat, or excessive UV Light.

The user is required to inspect their harness before use and the company must inspect and document that inspection annually. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the end-user to determine when a harness or lanyard is unfit for use and should be removed from service. Proper adherence to the inspection and maintenance criteria may extend useful life beyond 5 years.

### **Can I use Werner products with those from another manufacturer?**

ANSI and OSHA standards emphasize compatibility of components with a fall protection system. That being said, all pieces of equipment are tested individually and must meet the requisite ANSI standards. It is acceptable to interchange products with another manufacturer. When a product is sold as a system, such as a temporary horizontal lifeline system, the component parts are tested as a system and are not interchangeable.

### **What is the maximum free-fall distance a worker can fall while working in a “fall arrest” condition?**

The worker can free-fall a maximum of “6 feet” and not come in contact with any obstruction or lower level.

### **How much strength does my anchor have to support?**

According to OSHA regulations, anchorages used for the attachment of personal fall arrest systems shall meet the following requirements:

Construction: 29CFR 1926.502, Subpart M:

Anchorage used for attachment of personal fall arrest equipment shall be independent of any other anchorage being used to support or suspend platforms and capable of

supporting “5,000 pounds” (22.2kn) per employee attached, or shall be designed, installed, and used as follows:

(i) as part of a complete fall arrest system which maintains a safety factor of at least two:

(ii) under the supervision of a qualified person.

Personal fall arrest systems, when stopping a fall, shall:

- Limit the arresting force of an employee to, 1,800 pounds when used with a full body harness
- Be rigged as such that an employee can neither free fall more than 6 feet nor contact a lower level
- Bring an employee to a complete stop and limit the deceleration distance an employee travels to 3.5 feet. (the length of the shock absorbers on the lanyards)
- And have sufficient strength to withstand the potential impact energy of an employee falling a distance of 6 feet, or the free fall permitted by the system, whichever is less.

### **Does my Self Retracting Lifeline need to be recertified every year?**

No. It is required that the end-user inspect the Self Retracting Lifeline before each use, and inspect and document that inspection at least annually. The Self Retracting Lifeline will be required to be re-certified based on the following conditions:

1. It has realized the load of a fallen worker
2. The load indicator has been revealed
3. The snap hook is inoperable
4. The cable or webbing has excessive wear or kinks
5. The cable or webbing does not engage when tested or it does not release

Re-certification for all Self Retracting Lifelines will be performed in El Paso, Texas.

What is the maximum weight a worker can weigh while wearing a full body harness?

A worker can weigh a maximum of 310 pounds, including tool weight.

At what height am I required to wear fall protection?

The fall protection trigger height is 6 feet in construction and 4 feet in general industry.

Can I connect two snap hooks (or two lanyards) to one D-ring?

Werner snap hooks are not designed to hook back into each other or to one D-ring. There is a possibility that unintentional disengagement could occur. Even though all Werner snap hooks gates are rated at the new ANSI standard of 3,600 pounds, the practice of connecting two snap hooks together is not acceptable.

### **Can I wash my harness and lanyard?**

Washing your harness and lanyard is allowed following specific cleaning procedures:

1. Wipe off all surface dirt with a dampened sponge.
2. Squeeze the sponge dry.
3. Dip the sponge in a mild solution of commercial soap or detergent.
4. Work up a thick lather, and vigorously work back and forth.
5. Wipe dry with a clean cloth.
6. Hang to dry in a dry and shady area, not directly in the sun.

Do not wash your harness or lanyard in a washer or dryer as it will damage both. Werner is not responsible for damaged equipment should this occur.

### **Can I attach a lanyard to a self-retracting lifeline?**

No. If you require a longer working length for that specific application, you will be required to use a longer self-retracting lifeline. Additionally, Werner does not advocate connecting two snap hooks together. The risk of unintentional disengagement can occur.

### **Can I get a lanyard longer than 6 feet in length?**

No. The longest length is 6 feet. They will be available in shorter lengths in the future, 3-4-5 feet.

### **Am I required to be tied off when using a portable ladder?**

No. Neither the ladder standard (29 CFR 1926, subpart X) nor the fall protection standard (29 CFR 1926 subpart M) requires fall protection for workers while working on portable ladders. This can sometimes be confusing as the trigger height in construction is 6 feet, and 4 feet in general industry. Additionally, when a worker is climbing a permanently mounted ladder (fixed) that is 20 feet or greater, the worker must be protected by a ladder cage or personal fall arrest system.

### **What are the new Fall Protection requirements for Residential Construction?**

Effective June 16th, 2011, employers utilizing alternative fall protection found in the rescinded 1999 Interim Fall Protection Compliance Guidelines for Residential Construction will be subjected to OSHA citations if they fail to comply with CFR 1926.501(b)(3).

- Under the new directive employers must follow 1926.501(b)(3)
- 1926.501(b)(3) states...workers engaged in residential roofing construction activities 15 feet or more above lower level shall be protected by guardrail systems, safety net systems, or a personal fall protection system.
- Essentially, Roofing Contractors must comply with the same standards as everyone else.
- For reference, Roofing Contractors are allowed to use Alternative Measures of protection such as: Controlled Access Zones, Covers, Positioning Devices, Warning Lines, and or Warning line and Safety Monitor System.
- The above referenced Alternative Measures are not applicable on most sloped roofs.

# EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION RECORD

**Subject: Frequently asked questions about Fall Protection**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's name & Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Session:    /    /    Time Started       :       am / pm    Time Finished       :       am / pm

**Please print your name and job title. Then sign your name.**

## ATTENDEES:

Print Name	Trade	Signature