



## Shock-Absorbing Lanyards Can Let You Down

A quick-acting braking system that arrests falls within inches, not feet, has safety managers retiring their shock-absorbing lanyards in favor of a new generation of compact, lightweight personal fall limiters (PFLs), also known as self-retracting lifelines. And now, as manufacturers introduce PFLs with 100% tie-off fall protection capability (dual legs or twin legs), workers can move safely anywhere on a job site without ever being disconnected and at risk of a fall.

Whether on a construction site, building scaffolding, or doing maintenance at a wind farm, it's good to know someone has your back.

Recently one of the nation's largest manufacturers made a concerted effort to reduce fall hazards, 150 personal fall limiters were recently added to their arsenal of fall protection equipment in a move that will eventually outlaw lanyards on the job site. All employees, contractors and sub-contractors will be required to comply with the new policy, which incorporates rigorous, hands-on training and inspection, and encourages people to take personal responsibility for their own safety.

This has become a growing trend with safety-conscious industries, construction companies and utilities that are eliminating shock-absorbing lanyards on the job site.

The 6-foot shock-absorbing lanyard was the dominant tool in personal fall protection for years, but as soon as personal fall limiters became available as a viable alternative, the lanyards were headed to being a thing of the past, much like safety belts were a decade-and-a half earlier.

The primary driver of their decision to change out lanyards for PFLs, safety managers tell us, is fall arrest clearance, which is critical to worker safety.

While traditional, 6-foot shock-absorbing lanyards allow for up to 6 feet of free-fall distance before activating, and another 3 ½ feet of deceleration distance before arresting a fall, a personal fall limiter requires less than 2 feet to arrest freefalls. If you have 15 feet of fall clearance or less, you'd better have a retractable on, or you're going to hit the ground.

Developed in response to workers' needs for quick stopping action at low fall clearances and to allow greater mobility around barriers, personal fall limiters have evolved to become more compact, lightweight and affordable. Today's high-strength, high-impact materials allow product engineers to build smaller units that can withstand the required fall forces. Some models accommodate workers up to 400 lbs. including tool weight. Advanced designs incorporate a built-in swivel mechanism, and D-ring connectors that easily adapt two lightweight PFLs for continuous 100% tie-off fall protection, eliminating the need for double-legged shock-absorbing lanyards.

With the reduction in size and weight, comes a reduction in price, making PFLs more affordable than ever.

The latest innovation is the new ANSI Z359.1 compliant line of retractable lifelines introduced by Honeywell Safety Products – the Miller® TurboLite™, TwinTurbo™, Turbo T-BAK™ and the Twin Turbo T-BAK™ personal fall limiters.

Wondering if it's time to transition from lanyards to PFLs? Think of it this way -- for years cars were not equipped with seatbelts; then came lap belts; then a lap-belts plus shoulder harnesses; then they were incorporated together with quick-acting pretensioners; then they moved around you automatically when the door closed. We complained about the changes, but we got used to them, and now we buckle up without thinking whenever we get in our car.

Advances in personal fall protection have taken us from the safety belt, to the 6-foot shock-absorbing lanyard, to personal fall limiters. You think you're never going to be in a car accident and you think you're never actually going to fall. If a person falls, it could lead to an incapacitating injury or worse. But with the right fall arrest equipment, a person can go home safe after work. Isn't it worth it?

*Building an enduring culture of safety can be the most cost-effective and proven accident-prevention process. Creating and internalizing this culture is the most successful way to minimize costly injuries and maintain a safer, more productive and engaged workforce. Honeywell Safety Products knows that building a safety of culture is not just a set of rules; it's a new philosophy of preventing injury in the workplace. Safety is no longer something defined and enforced by management,; rather, it becomes the right and responsibility of each and every employee. A culture of safety refers to the extent to which individuals and groups commit to personal responsibility for safety; act to preserve, enhance and communicate safety concerns; strive to actively learn, adapt and modify behavior based on lessons learned from mistakes; and strive to be honored in association with these values. A culture of safety exists when safety is everyone's priority and workers make safe choices on their own.*