

Hooked on Safety:

Fall Protection Equipment Inspection and Maintenance

Fall protection equipment maintenance and inspection is an essential part of safety when working at height. Workers need to follow these simple steps as part of the routine to ensure that harnesses and lanyards offer optimal protection:

- All harnesses and lanyards must be inspected before use. Users need to check and ensure that all labels, harness serial numbers, inspection and withdrawal dates are legible. It is also important to check that the safety standard certification mark is visible.
- Inspect the harness and lanyard webbing for any cuts, tears, holes, excessive stretching or abrasion damage. Depending on the type of industry, harnesses can be exposed to heat, corrosives and even hardware, which can compromise the integrity of the webbing.
- Examine all the harness and lanyard hardware and check for corrosion, deformation or excessive movement. Buckle adjusters, D-rings, and Snap Hooks should be free from dirt and damage. If any of the hardware exhibits excessive wear and tear – replace it immediately.
- Ropes should be checked for cuts, abrasion or fraying, as well as cracked or broken thimbles. If damage to the rope is visible, remove the rope from service and document.
- Check all the sewing on the harness and lanyard to ensure that there are no broken, cut or worn threads. It is also important to look out for any damaged or weakened threads as a result of damage through exposure or deterioration. If there are any visible unauthorised repairs, remove the equipment from service immediately.

Basic care of the safety equipment will not only prolong its durable life, but will also contribute towards the performance of its vital safety functions. Proper storage and maintenance after use are just as important as cleaning the equipment of dirt, corrosives and contaminants.

The most effective way of cleaning a harness or lanyard is to first wipe the surface with a damp sponge, before working up a lather using a mild solution of water and dishwashing liquid. Rinse the equipment in lukewarm water, and hang feely to dry away from excessive heat.

To avoid unnecessary damage and deterioration to harness and lanyards as a result of exposure to heat, corrosive or sharp edges, as well as UV or other factors. All inspections of safety equipment must be carried out with reference to AS/NZS 1891.4. If there is any doubt about the ability of a piece of equipment to perform accordingly, it is to be removed from service.

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.