



Toolbox TALK

FALL RESCUE

A harness and lanyard tied back to an appropriate anchor point may not be enough to prevent fall injuries. Employees who hang in harnesses are prone to orthostatic intolerance, widely known as suspension trauma. While hanging vertically in a harness, the harness' leg straps reduce circulation and cause blood to pool in the legs, the blood then deoxygenates and creates metabolic waste. Since blood is pooling in the legs, blood flow back to the chest and head is reduced, causing confusion, disorientation, and sometimes death.

To mitigate these hazards:

- Ensure your harness fits and is adjusted properly. The harness should be snug and feel a little restrictive. Eliminate as much slack as possible.
- Before working at heights, develop a strategy to get back to a solid surface should a fall occur. Discuss the plan with your coworkers.
- Work directly below your anchor point whenever possible. Working away from the anchor can increase fall distances and cause swinging falls, which may cause collisions with other objects and employees.
- If a fall occurs, use the relief step devices on your harness to create foot loops. These loops will help distribute your weight away from your groin and can slow the onset of suspension trauma.

Always remember, your personal protective equipment does not make you invincible. It should only be relied on as a last resort or in conjunction with other protective strategies.

Date:

ATTENDANCE RECORD

SUPERVISOR:

CREW MEMBERS PRESENT:

COMMENTS/FEEDBACK:

