

Using Harnesses And Lanyards

Are you sure you should be using a harness?

Unless you are using it as secondary protection in a cherrypicker or scissor lift, the answer is almost certainly no.

Fall arrest harnesses are at the bottom of the work at height hierarchy and should only be used as a last resort if it is not possible to use more suitable equipment.

This is because they only catch you, nobody else, and even then, only if you are using and attaching them properly – people have fallen because the lanyard was not attached, or the anchor point failed – it's easy to forget.

- There are two ways of using harnesses and lanyards – one is work restraint, where the user is prevented from falling by being tied back like a dog on a lead – the other is fall arrest where a falling person is caught when the lanyard snatches.
- In any situation, their use needs to be properly planned and only used if fully detailed in your method statement that has been approved by Interserve Project Services.
- In any set-up like harnesses and lanyards, it is only as good as its weakest link. This includes the anchor point – is it up to the potential shock load?
- Also obviously includes the harness and lanyard itself – therefore these need to be subject to an inspection regime.
 - Visual before each use
 - Detailed and recorded, at least every 3 months
- Did you know that to act as effective fall arrest, you need about 6m clear, and unobstructed for a harness and lanyard to catch you before you hit the deck?
- Even if the harness and lanyard catch you, people die of a condition known as suspension trauma if they are not rescued.

You can die in as little as 5 minutes.

- You therefore need effective rescue arrangements, possibly a cherrypicker, in which case, what are you doing relying on a harness anyway?

Remember the work at height hierarchy

Questions:

- 1 What is the hierarchy for working at height?
- 2 What are the two ways harnesses and lanyards can be used?
- 3 What inspection regime is needed?

Further Information:- CIP Manual, Sections 7 & 8