

TOOLBOX TALK #35

FALL PROTECTION MISUSE – LEADING EDGE SRLs AND WARNING LINES

Only self-retracting lifelines (SRLs) that are designed for leading edge work or that are edge rated should be used in a horizontal arrangement, otherwise the result can be equipment failure due to point loading of the lanyard. In addition, if the equipment does not have an energy absorber between the edge point and the worker, the worker could receive the full impact of the fall without the benefit of an energy absorber.

Normal SRLs have been tested in the horizontal arrangement and this testing has shown the dire consequences of using the equipment in this manner (cables have failed when rubbed across surface edges!). Based on this and other research studies, standards now include requirements that SRLs that are tested for use in this arrangement receive special indication as “edge rated”.



To avoid failure at a leading edge:

- Ensure that equipment that could go over an edge is rated for that type of use (e.g., SRL-LE)
- Use an edge protector to minimize the potential damage on lanyards going over an edge
- Ensure that there is an energy absorber at the worker’s body to minimize the potential for additional forces on the body.

Warning Line Systems

Guidelines for warning line systems and controlled access zones are all direct, yet it is still common to find a combination of systems that neither provides protection nor meets requirements.

According to OSHA standards, warning line systems must meet the following requirements:

- Located 34 to 39 inches off the surface (roof) and visible
- Flagged every 6 feet
- Tensile strength of 500 pounds
- Tip over force of 16 pounds