

TOOLBOX TALK #37

FALL PROTECTION MISUSE – DAMAGED AND RECALLED EQUIPMENT

Workers are often unaware or not properly trained on what to look for when performing a pre-use inspection. For example, UV exposure discoloration, small cuts and corrosives/acid exposure can have serious consequences to equipment use. Employees may not acknowledge that these seemingly minor equipment issues are critical problems for proper functionality.

These examples highlight the importance of pre-use inspection to minimize the risk of equipment misuse or failure. The pre-use inspection is a mandatory part of a fall protection program. Workers must be trained to properly inspect equipment with both visual and tactile methods to make sure any imperfections are recognized before using the equipment.



Another way to minimize the risk of damaged equipment is to plan ahead to ensure proper storage. When equipment is stored in a job box or van, the interior can reach an extremely high temperature, which can damage soft goods. In addition, similar damage can occur when equipment is placed into storage while wet and is later exposed to direct sunlight.

It is important to maintain as much environmental control as possible to avoid allowing soft goods to be exposed to hazardous materials, chemicals or UV lighting. There are several ways to avoid misuse issues:

- Ensure that competent persons conduct detailed, comprehensive formal equipment inspections at least annually.
- Register the products to be made aware in the event of a product recall or advisory. If products are not registered, ensure that the competent person annual equipment inspection includes reviewing product inventory against product recalls.
- Develop and maintain a relationship with a manufacturer, distributor, training entity or consultant organization to remain current on advisories and advances in technology.
- Store equipment in an environment that is as protected as possible.