TOOLBOX TALK #38

FALL PROTECTION HARNESSES

Falls are the leading cause of death in construction. Almost every workday, somewhere in the United States, a construction worker dies as a result of a fall. To stop a fatal fall …

1. **Wear a full-body harness.** A proper fall protection harness has straps worn around the trunk and thighs. If you fall it will distribute "stopping force" across your thighs, pelvis, chest and shoulders to prevent severe injury.
2. **Inspect your harness.** It must be worn properly and be in good condition.
    - Inspect your harness for worn or damaged straps, buckles, D-ring and lines.
    - Follow manufacturer's instructions when you put on your harness
    - Make sure all straps are fastened and adjusted correctly
    - Don't start work until you are satisfied with the condition and fit of your fall protection harness
3. **Make sure you are connected.** Your lanyard should be attached to the D-ring on your fall arrest harness, then anchored securely to an anchor point. The anchorage must be capable of supporting at least 5000 pounds per worker attached. Ask your supervisor if your anchor point can sustain the load without failure. Guardrails are NOT anchor points.

When do I need a fall protection harness?

If you are working …

- More than six feet above the lower level and
- You are not protected by a system of guardrails or safety nets

Know the ABCs of personal fall arrest systems

- **A**nchor Point
- **B**ody harness
- **C**onnectors (lanyards, deceleration devices, D-rings, etc.)

You are not safe from a fall unless you tie off.

And it's NOT over when the fall stops!

It only takes a short time for the harness to restrict blood circulation, which can lead to unconsciousness or even death. OSHA requires employers to have a plan to provide for prompt rescue of employees in the event of a fall.