

Fall Equipment Inspection

The fall protection equipment inspection is an essential element of a personal fall protection program. All components of the personal fall arrest system must be inspected thoroughly by the worker prior to each use. In addition, the equipment must be inspected at least annually (at least quarterly for Direct Hire [BECON] equipment) by a competent person that is designated by the employer. If any part of the system fails to meet the manufacturer's requirements, the component must be marked as defective and immediately removed from service. In recent years, manufacturer's have issued "Stop Use and Return" instructions for shock-absorbing lanyards, self-retracting lanyards, beam clamps, and carabineers based on findings of defects in the field. Every component of the fall arrest or fall restraint system must be fully functional and capable of performing to its design criteria. If not—it must be taken out of service immediately.

Inspection Program

For each contractor, the designated competent person must establish a program for the thorough and timely inspection of fall protection equipment.

The program shall include, at minimum:

- An inventory of the equipment to be inspected (including identification tagging)
- The frequency and type of inspection (pre-use checks, competent person inspection)
- Action to be taken upon the discovery of finding defective equipment
- Records of equipment inspections and training of users

Competent Person Inspections

A competent person is an individual who, by way of training and/or experience, is knowledgeable of applicable standards, is capable of identifying workplace hazards relating to the specific operation, is designated by the employer, and has authority to take appropriate actions (i.e., a "competent person" as defined by OSHA) for fall protection equipment and components in accordance with manufacturer instructions. This annual thorough inspection (at least quarterly for Direct Hire [BECON] equipment) consists of the following:

- Check function and condition
- Check function of snap hook (e.g., self-locking, self-closing)
- Retraction of Self-retracting lifeline/lanyard (SRL)
- Indication of impact
- Check for impact on snap hook swivel - SRL
- Ripped/torn stitching – no more than two stitches total
- Check for indication of impact on all devices
- Deformation of metal components
- Corrosion
- Holes

Pre-use Check

An inspection of the equipment must be completed prior to **each** use of fall protection equipment. Pre-use checks must be done visually by running the equipment through your hands to detect small cuts, hardening of fibers or deterioration caused by exposure to chemicals or ultraviolet light. Mechanical items must be checked for function. Inspections should be performed in a well lit area.

Storage and Care

Ensure that fall protection equipment is kept clean and stored in a cool, dry location away from direct exposure to sunlight. Follow the storage and product care recommendations provided by the manufacturer. Never expose the equipment to oil, chemicals, excessive heat, or other degrading elements.



How many safety problems can you find with this fall harness and lanyard?