
Fall Protection Glossary

A

Anchorage: A secure point of attachment for lifelines, lanyards or deceleration devices.

B

Body belt: A strap with means both for securing it about the waist and for attaching it to a lanyard, lifeline or deceleration device.

Body harness: Straps that may be secured about the person in a manner that distributes the fall-arrest forces over at least the thighs, pelvis, waist, chest and shoulders with a means for attaching the harness to other components of a personal fall arrest system.

C

Connector: A device that is used to couple (connect) parts of a personal fall arrest system or positioning device system together.

Controlled access zone: A work area designated and clearly marked in which certain types of work (such as overhand bricklaying) may take place without the use of conventional fall protection systems — guardrail, personal arrest or safety net — to protect the employees working in the zone.

D

Deceleration device: Any mechanism — such as rope, grab, ripstitch lanyard, specially-woven lanyard, tearing or deforming lanyards, automatic self-retracting lifelines/lanyards — which serves to dissipate a substantial amount of energy during a fall arrest or otherwise limits the energy imposed on an employee during fall arrest.

Deceleration distance: The additional vertical distance a falling person travels, excluding lifeline elongation and free fall distance, before stopping, from the point at which a deceleration device begins to operate.

F

Free fall: The act of falling before a fall arrest system begins to slow the fall.

Free fall distance: The vertical displacement of the fall arrest attachment point on the body harness between onset of the fall and just before the system begins to slow the fall. This does not cover the deceleration distance and lifeline/lanyard elongation, but does include any deceleration device or self-retracting lifeline/ lanyard extension before they operate and fall arrest forces happen.

G

Guardrail system: A barrier erected, including a mi-rail/or line with toe board to prevent employees/materials and tools from falling to lower levels.

H

Hole: A void or gap 2 inches (5.1 centimeters) or more in the least dimension in a floor, roof, or other walking/working surface.

L

Lanyard: A flexible line of rope, wire rope or strap that generally has a connector at each end for connecting the body belt or body harness to a deceleration device, lifeline or anchorage.

Leading edge: The edge of a floor, roof or formwork for a floor or other walking/working surface (such as the deck) which changes location as additional floor, roof, decking or formwork sections are placed, formed or constructed.

Lifeline: A component consisting of a flexible line for connection to an anchorage at one end to hang vertically (vertical lifeline), or for connection to anchorages at both ends to stretch horizontally (horizontal lifeline) and that serves as a means for connecting other components of a personal fall arrest system to the anchorage.

Low-slope roof: A roof having a slope less than or equal to 4 in 12 (vertical to horizontal).

Lower level: The areas or surfaces to which an employee can fall, e.g., ground levels, floors, platforms, ramps, runways, excavations, pits, tanks, material, water, equipment, structures, or portions thereof.

O

Opening: A gap or void 30 inches (76 centimeters) or higher and 18 inches (46 centimeters) or wider, in a wall or partition, through which employees can fall to a lower level.

Overhand bricklaying and related work: Is the process of laying bricks and masonry units such that the surface of the wall to be jointed is on the opposite side of the wall from the mason, requiring the mason to lean over the wall to complete the work. Related work includes mason tending and electrical installation incorporated into the brick wall during the overhand bricklaying process.

P

Personal fall arrest system: A system including but not limited to an anchorage, connectors, and a body belt or body harness used to arrest an employee in a fall from a working level. As of Jan. 1, 1998, the use of a body belt for fall arrest is prohibited.

Positioning device system: A body belt or harness system rigged to allow an employee to be supported on an elevated vertical surface, such as a wall, and work with both hands free while leaning backwards. Positioning devices cannot be used as a fall arrest system

R

Roof: The exterior surface on the top of a building, not including floors or formwork.

Roofing work: The hoisting, storage, application, and removal of roofing materials and equipment, e.g., insulation, sheet metal and vapor barrier work. This does not include the construction of the roof deck.

Rope grab: A deceleration device that travels on a lifeline and automatically, by friction, engages the lifeline and locks to arrest a fall.

S

Safety-monitoring system: A safety system in which a competent person is responsible for recognizing and warning employees of fall hazards.

Self-retracting lifeline/lanyard: A deceleration device containing a drum-wound line which can be slowly extracted from, or retracted onto, the drum under minimal tension during normal employee movement and which, after onset of a fall, automatically locks the drum and arrests the fall.

Snap hook: A connector consisting of a hook-shaped member with a normally closed keeper, or similar arrangement, which may be opened to permit the hook to receive an object and, when released, automatically closes to retain the object.

Steep roof: A roof having a slope greater than 4 in 12 (vertical to horizontal).

T

Toe board: A low protective barrier that prevents material and equipment from falling to lower levels and which protects personnel from falling.

U

Unprotected sides and edges: Any side or edge (except at entrances to points of access) of a walking/working surface (e.g., floor, roof, ramp, or runway) where there is no wall or guardrail system at least 39 inches (1 meter) high.

W

Walking/working surface: Any surface, whether horizontal or vertical, on which an employee walks or works, including but not limited to floors, roofs, ramps, bridges, runways, formwork and concrete reinforcing steel. Does not include ladders, vehicles or trailers on which employees must be located to perform their work duties.

Warning line system: A barrier erected on a roof to warn employees that they are approaching an unprotected roof side or edge and which designates an area in which roofing work may take place without the use of guardrail, body belt or safety net systems to protect employees in the area.