Don't Forget your ABC's: Personal Fall Arrest Systems

Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAs) prevent us from striking the ground during a fall. These systems also limit potential impact forces in the event of a fall. Impact forces, the sudden shock that occurs when a falling body strikes the ground, increase as the workers height increases. For example, a simple 4-foot fall could end with a 200 lb. employee striking the ground with over 3,000 lbs. of force while a 10-foot fall could result in 8,000 lbs. of arresting force. Even more reason why we need to wear our PFAs. When using a PFA always remember your ABCs

A - Anchorage

Anchorages must support 5000 lbs. or two times the suspected load. A simple way to determine is to imagine your anchorage supporting the weight of a small car or pickup truck. Anchorages have various designs that depend on the application. These include permanent anchors for reuse and the necessary protection on sloped roofs, on steel beams, and flat roofs for example.

- Inspect anchorage for defects that include warps, bends or cracks.
- Installing anchorages directly above the worker provides the best protection.
- Install the anchorage according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Anchorage typically support one workers unless specifically engineered

B - Body Harness

Your body wear or the body harness fits to your body and helps absorbs some of the force created by a fall. Each harness withstands an 1800 lb. load and works with the connector to limit forces on the body.

- Inspect harnesses prior to each use and periodically.
- Look for bent or warped buckles or grommets.
- Check shoulder straps and webbing for frays and damaged stitching.
- Inspect straps and webbing for chemical damage or heat. Storing in direct sunlight damages harnesses as well.
- Wear harnesses properly.

C - Connectors

A connector or lanyard attaches the body harness to our anchorage. Lanyards whether self-retracting, shock absorbing, or lanyards are equipped with deceleration devices that limit the fall distance and arresting force (the sudden shock that occurs at the end of a fall).

- Be sure to inspect lanyards prior to each use.
- Check webbed or rope lanyards for chemical damage or wear.
- Protect lanyards from chemical exposure, grease, oils and heat.
- Check self-closing hooks, making sure the gates close and lock properly.

Remember: Remove damaged components from service. Things to do:

- Physically show employees your ABC's.
- Highlight inspection items, proper anchorage installation and proper use.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: **fwcruminsurance.com**