

Personal Fall Arrest Systems

Though this summary does not constitute an all-inclusive fall protection plan for your jobsite, keep these tips in mind when utilizing a personal fall arrest system (PFAS), per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).¹

Basic components of personal fall arrest systems

Below is a list including some, but not all, of the components identified by OSHA:

- **Anchorage** – A fixed and secured point of attachment for lifelines, lanyards, or deceleration devices capable of supporting 5,000 lbs. Sound anchorages include: structural members, but not standpipes, vents, other piping systems, and electrical conduits.
- **Body Harness** – Straps secured to the body to distribute fall arrest forces over the thighs, pelvis, waist, chest, and shoulders, with a means to attach to other components of a PFAS.
- **Connectors** – Devices used to couple/connect parts of the PFAS and positioning system devices together, such as a carabiner, D-ring, buckle, or a locking snap-hook. The lanyard should never be looped over a beam or other support.
- **Deceleration Device** – Any mechanism serving to dissipate a substantial amount of energy during a fall arrest, or otherwise limit the energy imposed on an employee during a fall arrest. These include rope grabs, rip-stitch lanyards, specially-woven lanyards, tearing or deforming lanyards, and automatic self-retracting lifelines/lanyards.



Commonly overlooked PFAS items

- Inspect systems before each use for wear, damage, and other deterioration. Defective components should be removed from service.
- Remove systems and components from service immediately if they have been subjected to fall impact, until inspected by a competent person and deemed undamaged and suitable for use.
- Do not attach personal fall arrest systems to guardrail systems or hoists.
- The system should be rigged so that an employee can neither free-fall more than 6 feet, nor contact any lower level.

Q&A:

Here are some questions to help start conversations around the PFAS in your workplace:

- Where and when are PFAS required at this jobsite?
- How often should your personal fall arrest system be inspected?
- What should you do if you find defects with the personal fall arrest system?

For more information, download the **OSHA Fall Prevention Training Guide**.



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¹Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Standard 1926, subpart X, 2018