

Introduction

It is generally accepted by governing bodies that the hierarchy of fall protection should provide the starting point for considering what type of fall protection system is required.

Source: <http://doshtihome.blogspot.com/2016/02/personal-fall-arrest-and-fall-restraint.html>

1. Eliminate the Risk

Avoid work at height where possible or locate plant and equipment in safe locations where there is no risk of a fall.

2. Guard the Hazard

When working at height is essential, ensure that workers are not exposed to unnecessary risks; consider providing a parapet or guardrail to eliminate the fall hazard.

3. Protect the Worker

Where it is not possible to eliminate the risk of falling, use suitable fall protection system to minimise the consequences of a fall. This can be achieved with a fall arrest or fall restraint system—two completely different entities.

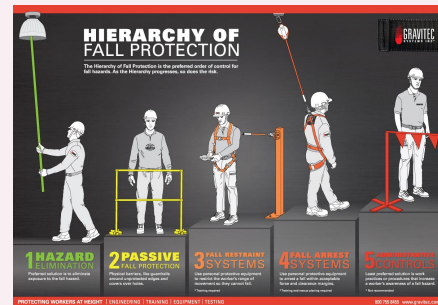
In essence, a fall restraint system prevents workers from reaching a hazard, while a fall arrest system allows workers to reach a hazard and then protects them if they should fall.

4. Fall Restraint

These systems allow a person access to conduct their duties but prevent them from reaching a point where a fall could occur. Fall Restraint systems are generally suitable if the person needs to work at the edge of a hazard. For example, where there is a need to maintain gutters along the edge of a roof, or if there are other potential fall hazards such as a fragile roof, roof lights or air vents. If fitting a fall restraint system, it is recommended that the system should be tested to fall arrest loads to ensure a person's safety in situations where the system may be misused (i.e. when the person using it wears an over-length lanyard to enable access to the edge of a roof).

Restraint systems are generally positioned more than 2 m from the hazard. This is because common practice is for the worker to be connected to the system by a fixed length 1.5 m lanyard.

Fall Protection Hierarchy



5. Fall Arrest

A fall arrest system provides maximum freedom of movement for workers to conduct their duties. In doing so it allows them to reach the point where a fall could occur, such as the edge of a roof for gutter maintenance. However, in the event of a fall, the fall will be arrested and so allow the person to either effect a self-rescue or be rescued.

Rescue

Following a fall, consideration must be given to the rescue of the worker – in fact, there is a legal obligation to have a full and comprehensive rescue plan in place when individuals are working at height

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By [deleted]
cheatography.com/deleted-2754/

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