

# A Quick Guide to Safety Harness Use

Does your team know how to use a harness correctly? Would they be able to spot a faulty one? And how do harnesses tie in with risk assessments? On our Inspection and Safe Use of Harness training course, you'll get all the theoretical and practical knowledge you need about safety harness use – and all of it in just half a day.

## What is a Safety Harness?

A safety harness is a simple piece of equipment. There are many different models and variations in style, but in its simplest form, a safety harness is a system of restraints designed to prevent the user from falling from a height. Safety harnesses also greatly reduce the risk of injury if they were to fall from height.

Once the user is wearing the harness, they attach it to a solid, stationary object. Should they fall for whatever reason, the harness and the fall protection system will prevent them from contacting the ground.

## Why Should I Be Using a Safety Harness?

When used correctly, your fall protection system (your safety harness is part of that) will prevent injuries and ultimately, save lives. Working from height is one of the most dangerous aspects of industrial work and, sadly, claims lives every single year. Safety harnesses, when combined with sufficient working at height practice, reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring.

On a more practical note, harnesses give workers the reassurance that they have taken all the necessary precautions to protect themselves in a potentially dangerous work situation. They'll be able to freely use their hands and carry out the required tasks.

For organisations, it's worth investing in working at height and safety harness use training. By training your staff in how to use safety harnesses and work at height, you're less likely to deal with compensation, injured workers on sick leave, or disruption to your project.

## How Do I Use a Safety Harness?

We said it would be a quick guide to safety harness use – we know that you really want to get into it and figure out how it all goes together.

But before that, you need to know how to inspect the harness to make sure that it's suitable for industrial use.

## Inspecting Your Safety Harness

As with all Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), you should inspect your safety harness for suitability every 12 months and complete the detailed periodic inspection regularly. That's on top of checking the safety harness before each use.

Check for signs of damage, or 'bobbing' to the fabric. Signs of loose stitching could also indicate that there's a problem with the harness structure.

Ensure that the buckles are not bent, chipped, or damaged. The d-rings and plastic loops should also be checked for any distortion, cracks, or rust. Finally, double-check the label. There should be a serial number, manufactured date, and inspection date.

**Older harnesses should not be used.**

# Using Your Safety Harness

If you fail to assemble your harness correctly, then you'll end up doing more harm than good.

Your legs come first – pull the thigh straps up and around your legs and tighten them to suit. Next, make sure that your arms are through the arm straps, and connect the chest strap so that the fabric is tight on the shoulders. The chest strap and shoulder straps should be central and comfortable.

Try to move your arms and shoulders – if there are any restrictions, adjust the buckles as necessary.

Once you've assembled your safety harness correctly, you can attach it to whatever device has been identified as safe and reliable in your working at height instructions.

## How To Carry Out Safety Harness Inspection And Precautions



A safety harness is a form of personal protective equipment designed to protect workers from falling from height and sustain the worker for rescue. The safety harness is an attachment between a stationary and non-stationary object and is usually fabricated from rope, cable or webbing and locking hardware. Some safety harnesses are used in combination with a shock absorber, which is used to regulate deceleration when the end of the rope is reached.

The safety harness which uses a different concept from the body belt helps distribute the force resulting from slip to part of the body that is strong enough to handle it, like large muscles of the upper thighs, chest, and shoulders, as well as the bony mass of the pelvis.

**A full safety harness comprises of five (5) major components:**

1. The body strap
2. The D-Ring (Dorsal D-Ring) which serves a link between the body strap and the lanyard. It is also used as the rescue anchorage point.
3. The lanyard which links the body strap to the anchorage point.
4. The anchorage which is always attached to a stationary point which will suspend the worker in-case of any slip.
5. Connecting and Adjusting buckles (iron and plastics)

## **Safety Precautions When Using The Safety Harness**

- It must be properly worn always. The body strap should be adjusted using the adjusting buckle to make it fit and avoid sagging.
- It must be inspected by a competent person daily before use.
- Workers should be trained on the use of the safety harness
- The lanyard should be long enough not to obstruct the activity but should not affect the safety of the device.
- The anchor point should be strong enough to sustain the worker in case of any fall.
- The anchor point should always be above the Dorsal D-Ring as far as possible.
- Adequate Safety harness should be chosen depending on the type of job to be carried. It should be determined when a harness with a single lanyard is required and when a harness with a double lanyard is required.
- The working weight of the harness should be ascertained before use. Most harness working weight is 310 lbs; if the weight exceeds the harness working weight, harness with higher working weight should be used.

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# BASIC STEPS

To Wear Safety Harness



**STEP-01**




Always Lift the harness with the help of Dorsal D-ring

**STEP-05**




Make sure to pass the excess straps through the loops. The loose ends of the strap may expose the wearer to unnecessary risks.

**STEP-02**



Slip the shoulder straps over both the shoulders. Allow the Dorsal D-ring to lie just between your shoulder-blades at the back

**STEP-06**



Make sure that the dorsal D-Ring is easily accessible to your hand.

**STEP-03**



Connect the Chest Strap

**STEP-07**



Finally, you may check the fit of the Harness by sliding your 4 fingers under the Thigh strap.

**STEP-04**



Pull the leg strap between the legs and connect to the opposite end using the special buckles. Repeat for the other leg. All other connections are made similarly

**STEP-08**



This ensures that although the Harness has fitted tightly, it still allows full range of movement