Selecting the Correct Fall Arrest Equipment

Selecting the right fall arrest equipment is of vital importance when working from an elevated position in order to prevent serious injury or even death.

According to safety officers, in most instances where a fall does occur, injury results not only from the lack of or improper use of fall protection equipment, but also from using the incorrect equipment.

There are three key components of a Personal Fall Arrest System (PFAS) which must be in place and properly used to provide maximum worker protection – a harness, a connection, and an anchor/anchorage point.

Individually these components will not provide protection from a fall. However, when used properly and in conjunction with each other, they form a Personal Fall Arrest System that becomes vitally important for safety on the job site.

Selecting the Correct Harness

When selecting the right harness, wearer's must choose a harness that is designed for a specific application. With so many varieties of harnesses on the market, ranging from construction, ladder work, tower work and roof work, it is important to pick the right equipment for the job.

Each harness is engineered with a series of unique components, including different types of webbing, side, rear and frontal D-rings and lanyard rings, and provides a safety solution that closely matches the work environment.

It is also important to ensure that the harness fits well, and that the shoulder, waist and legs straps are adjusted.

Even though workers are wearing fall protection equipment on the job, by wearing the wrong type of harness they are risking serious injury or even death in the event of an accident.

Selecting the Correct Connection

The connection component of a fall arrest system acts to reduce the force of a sustained fall, when used in conjunction with a full body harness and suitable

anchorage. Depending on the work application, workers should always check the recommended connection component.

There are a number of connector choices available to workers including lanyards and fall arrestors, and when choosing the correct connection, it is important to consider the fall clearance distance, as well as the work application.

Workers who work around sharp edges are recommended to use lanyards or fall arrestors which are specifically designed to offer exceptional strength, durability and flexibility. And workers seeking maximum protection when welding or grinding at heights should consider lanyards which are fire retardant.

Selecting the Correct Anchorage Point
When attached to a suitable anchorage point, the anchorage connector completes the workers fall arrest system.

The best harness with the best lanyard cannot arrest a fall if an unsuitable anchorage is selected. An anchorage must support 15kN for a single tie-off for one individual, and in all cases the anchorage point selected must allow for minimum free fall clearances as required by ASNZS 1891.4, which when using a lanyard is 5.7m and when using a fall arrestor is 3.5m. An anchorage should also be positioned directly overhead whenever possible to avoid the pendulum effect which can cause a worker to swing as they fall, creating the potential for injury. Most importantly, an anchorage should be selected based on how a rescue would be performed.

The importance of wearing and using the correct fall arrest equipment cannot be overlooked in any workplace. To help your staff adhere to, and comply with OH&S standards, always make sure they are using the best fall protection equipment that is approved to Australian & New Zealand Standards.

Building an enduring culture of safety can be the most cost-effective and proven accident-prevention process. Creating and internalizing this culture is the most successful way to minimize costly injuries and maintain a safer, more productive and engaged workforce. Honeywell Safety Products knows that building a safety of culture is not just a set of rules; it's a new philosophy of preventing injury in the workplace. Safety is no longer something defined and enforced by management,; rather, it becomes the right and responsibility of each and every employee. A culture of safety refers to the extent to which individuals and groups commit to personal responsibility for safety; act to preserve, enhance and communicate safety concerns; strive to actively learn, adapt and modify behavior based on

lessons learned from mistakes; and strive to be honored in association with these values. A culture of safety exists when safety is everyone's priority and workers make safe choices on their own.