

FALL ARREST VS. FALL RESTRAINT

Fall arrest and fall restraint safety systems are very similar but have one important distinction between them ... if the difference is misunderstood, the result could be devastating.

The difference is:

- A fall arrest system will **STOP** you while falling.
- A fall restraint system will **HOLD** you back from reaching the edge and keep you from falling altogether.

Both systems are active fall protection systems but each have different uses for real-life applications.

WorkSafeBC regulation requires workers to use fall protection systems when there is a risk of a fall from a height of 3 m (10 ft.) or more or where a fall from a lesser height could result in serious injury.

What you should know:

- Training
- Inspections
- Where to Use Fall Arrest
- Where to Use Fall Restraint



FALL ARREST VS FALL RESTRAINT



Fall
Arrest

Fall
Restraint



BC Forest Safety

Safety is **good** business

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TRAINING

It is imperative to be current with your training when working at heights. You should have a thorough understanding of all aspects of an active fall protection system - everything from the anchor point, how to fit and inspect your harness and the rescue system that will save you if you fall.

INSPECTIONS

It may take 30-seconds to fall from height which is roughly the same amount of time it would take to check your gear before you start work for the day. This 30-second check takes minimal time but could save your life.

No matter what type of system you use, personally check and inspect the equipment before each use.

- Look for stitching that may be broken, burned or pulled, and stitching or rivets at hardware attachment points.
- Closely examine all webbing, belt ends, buckles and D-Rings. Ensure the snap hook freely engages the D-ring or the anchor point.
- Ensure the keeper (the moving part of the hook) is completely closed and locked in position.

WHEN TO USE FALL ARREST

A fall arrest system should only be used when other methods of fall protection are not available or possible, including engineering controls (eg. an elevated platform), guardrails, safety nets or travel restraint. Fall arrest systems should:

- keep the free fall distance as short as possible
- minimize the forces of the fall experienced by the worker
- protect the worker from striking other surfaces while falling
- protect the worker from the pendulum effect or swing falls

Fall hazards requiring full fall arrest protection systems might include: loading railcars, using a tarp wrapping station, re-aligning chain runs or clearing jam-ups from sorter bins, or crossing elevated and open chain runs and decks.

- Seek help from your supervisor whenever you enter into a new or unknown area of the operation.
- Ask about the locations where fall restraint or fall arrest equipment is needed.

WHEN TO USE FALL RESTRAINT

There are many fall hazards in sawmills. Materials are being lowered or lifted through 2nd floor doors, people are cleaning near belts that go to the chipper, saws are being lowered or lifted through openings in the saw file room floor, and workers may be sweeping debris into a floor opening that takes waste down to a conveyor. Fall restraint should be used to prevent workers from getting close to the edge of the openings.

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