

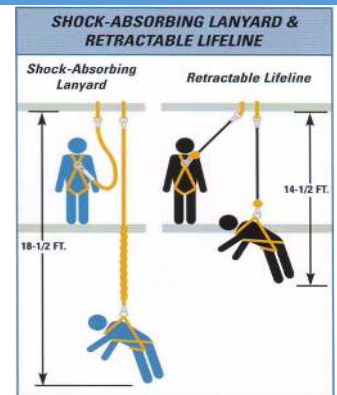


# Common Mistakes In Fall Protection

Fall Protection is essential to keeping employees safe on the job. It should be used with the highest level of knowledge and care. There are zero shortcuts when it comes to fall protection.

## Improper Lanyard Use

- It is important to utilize the correct lanyard length when working with the risk of a fall.
- Know the distinction between a retractable lanyard and an energy absorbing device.
- A retractable lanyard has applications because it catches quickly, but often exposes employees to the full force of the fall.
- An energy absorbing device will 'bounce' the employee and absorb the energy of the fall, but the employee will fall a greater length.
- Make sure to know the distance that an energy absorbing device is rated for—using a lanyard that is too long can cause the employee to hit the ground (ex. The employee is using a 8 ft lanyard on a 10 ft high platform, they will likely hit the ground if they fall).
- Remember to always inspect lanyards and harnesses prior to use.



## Improper Guardrails

Often times, guardrails are installed initially in adequate conditions, but as the site progresses, many are removed and not returned to the same condition. In order to be compliant and keep your employees safe, guardrails must meet the following requirements:

- Top edge height of top rails, or equivalent guardrail system members, shall be 42 inches (1.1 m) +/- 3 inches (8 cm) above the walking/working level.
- Midrails, screens, mesh, intermediate vertical members, or equivalent intermediate structural members shall be installed between the top edge of the guardrail system and the walking/working surface when there is no wall or parapet wall at least 21 inches (53 cm) high.
- Guardrail systems shall be capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 200 pounds (890 N) applied within 2 inches (5.1 cm) of the top edge, in any outward or downward direction, at any point along the top edge.
- Midrails, screens, mesh, intermediate vertical members, solid panels, and equivalent structural members shall be capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 150 pounds (666 N) applied in any downward or outward direction at any point along the midrail or other member.
- If wire rope is used for top rails, it shall be flagged at not more than 6-foot intervals with high-visibility material.
- Toeboards shall be provided when employees below could be exposed to falling objects such as tools. Toeboards shall be at least 3½ inches (8.9 cm) in height from top edge to floor level, and be capable of withstanding a force of 50 pounds (222 N) applied in any direction. Drainage clearance under toeboards is permitted.

## Other Common Mistakes

- Failure to inspect fall protection systems prior to use.
- Using the wrong size harness, causing either lack of circulation or the risk of slipping out of the harness in a fall.
- Using damaged or recalled equipment.
- Anchoring below the dorsal D ring.
- Not using an engineered anchor.
- Improper anchor installation.

