

According to the SIA's Safety Program for Suspended Scaffolds there are three main components to all suspended scaffold systems; support, suspended, and safety system. The safety system is your best and last protection against mistake.

Since January 1, 1998 OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.500 subpart M the use of body belts for fall arrest has become illegal. Full body harnesses are the rule for fall arrest. Even though this standard is well known within our industry, people are still sustaining injuries as the result of a fall.

Some of the reasons why people are still being injured, are the same reasons people are hurt or killed in car crashes.

- The seat belt in the car will wrinkle my clothes and I am only going a short distance.
- The shoulder harness in my car rubs against my neck and it is uncomfortable.
- I don't need a seat belt because I am a really safe driver.
- I have been driving for twenty years and my driving record is flawless.

Yet the simple fact remains that everything and everybody in a car traveling at 50 mph is also going 50 mph. When that car suddenly stops for any reason, only the car and those things attached to the car stop. Anything and anybody not attached to the car continues to move at 50 mph. If you are not attached to the car when it stops, you are most likely going to travel through the windshield at 50 mph.

Traveling a short distance to the corner store will not wrinkle your clothes as much as one moment of inattention on the part of another driver can.

When your shoulder harness rubs you the wrong way and is uncomfortable, it is not fitted correctly. Adjusting the drivers seat or seat belt should help you wear this important safety device more comfortably.

Even the safest of drivers can have a bad day when they meet the worst of drivers out on the road.

Twenty years experience should prove to you two things:

1. Your driving record is flawless because you pay attention and actively participate in protecting yourself.
2. You absolutely need to wear your seat belt because the alternative will ruin your whole day.

Subpart M Applies to YOU!

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.500 subpart M applies to you when you are:

- Within six feet of any unprotected edge with a vertical drop of six feet or more.
- Constructing a guardrail system on an unprotected edge you are required to comply with subpart M.
- Walking around in an area that has skylights or other types of holes, you are required to comply.
- Around excavations.
- Around dangerous equipment that you can fall into or onto.
- Are doing overhand bricklaying and related work.
- Are doing roofing on low slope and steep roofs.
- Are near wall openings, including those with chutes where the outside bottom edge is 6 feet or more below.

If you are not familiar with Subpart M or any of the codes related to the construction industry, you can visit the OSHA website at http://www.osha-slc.gov/OshStd_toc/OSHA_Std_toc_1926.html for more detailed information. You can also visit the OSHA home page at http://www.osha-slc.gov/OshStd_data/1926_0502.html

- 29CFR 1926.502 Subpart M (d) (21) "Personal fall arrest systems shall be inspected prior to each use for wear, damage and other deterioration, and defective components shall be removed from service."
- 29CFR 1926.502 Subpart M (e) (10) "Body belts, harnesses, and components shall be used only for employee protection (as part of a personal fall arrest system or positioning device system) and not to hoist materials." (How many times have you seen lifelines being used to lower power cord or wire ropes?)
- 29CFR 1926.503 Subpart M (a) (1) "The employer shall provide a training program for each employee who might be exposed to fall hazards..."
- 29CFR 1926.503 Subpart M (b) (1) "The employer shall verify compliance with paragraph (a) of this section by preparing a written certification record."

Calculated Risk

For those of you who still want to explain why you do not use your safety gear because of vast experience and a "calculated risk", here is something to consider.

According to the 331 Rule, that I recently heard:

- For every group of 331 persons performing any task less than perfect:
- 300 people will continue doing their work without any noticeable effect.
- 30 people will suffer a minor injury or incident.
- 1 person will be involved in a major incident or injury.

"Nearly 50 American workers are injured every minute of the 40-hour work week and almost 17 die each day." - <http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/worker/index.html>

Did You Know?

- If you are climbing into a platform at roof level, you must be tied off before you climb into the platform.
- Lifelines cannot be used to lower equipment from the side of the building and be used for your lifeline.
- Power Climber has a full line of safety gear: harnesses, lanyards and rope grabs. Call for your brochure today.
- Between October 1998 and September 1999, OSHA issued \$6,759,109 in penalties for violations related to standard 1926.501 fall protection.

Tips and Tricks

- On board your service truck, carry your own personal safety gear equipment. This way you can be prepared for most situations in the field.
- When your employer gives you a personal safety gear system, read the instructions that come with it. All safety gear should come with information about use, inspection of, and when it should be removed from service.

For questions or comments, contact Customer Service at 1-800-560-CLIMB (2546) or customerservice@safeworks.com.