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Features:

The 5000 Pound Myth about Fall Protection

Just For the Record...

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Did You Know?

Distracted driving crashes killed more than 5,400 people and injured nearly 500,000 in 2009.

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Drivers who are texting take their eyes off the road 400% more than when they are not texting.

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More texting leads to more crashes. With each additional 1 million text messages, fatalities from distracted driving rose more than 75%

Source: OSHA.gov

Volume II Issue I

The 5,000 Pound Myth About Fall Protection

For years the building industry has utilized the exemption granted by the Department of Labor to keep protecting workers with fall protection as defined in CFR 1926 Subpart M. As the industry moved to stream-line a “one size fits all” approach to worker safety, the original intent of the duty to provide fall protection was lost to complacency and misinformation.

When OSHA set out to adapt rulemaking which could provide the greatest amount of flexibility, it is likely there was never any belief that the original intent would be misquoted so often as to create fear that fall protection systems would remain infeasible indefinitely. As the original opponents of 1926 Subpart M worked to maintain their influence over the industry, they utilized every strategy they could to confuse the industry as to what OSHA meant when it spelled out specific requirements for fall protection equipment.

According to 1926.502, anchorages used for attachment of personal fall arrest equipment shall be independent of any anchorage being used to support or suspend platforms and capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds per employee attached, or shall be designed, installed and used as follows: as part of a complete personal fall arrest system which maintains a safety factor of at least two; and under the supervision of a qualified person. Personal fall arrest systems, when stopping a fall, shall: limit maximum arresting forces on an employee to 1,800 pounds when used with a body harness; be rigged such that an employee can neither free fall more than 6 feet, nor contact a lower level; bring an employee to a complete stop and limit maximum deceleration distance an employee travels to 3.5 feet; and have sufficient strength to withstand twice the potential impact energy of an employee free falling a distance of 6 feet or the free fall distance permitted by the system, whichever is less. It should be noted that there is a special emphasis added which states:

If the personal fall arrest system meets the criteria and protocols contained in Appendix C to subpart M, and if the system is being used by an employee having a combined person and tool weight of less than 310 pounds, the system will be considered to be in compliance with the provisions of paragraph (d)(16) of this section.

What does all this mean? Well after years of research, manufacturer development, and industry adoption, employers have options which meet the standards or are approved for use.

[The fall protection anchor point standard only requires the employer to establish the 5000 pound rating for an anchorage if it is not used under the supervision of a qualified person.]



Per OSHA definition a qualified person is one who by possession of a recognized degree, certificate or professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training and experience has successfully demonstrated his ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work, or the project. In other words a person with years of practical field experience is just as qualified as.. *Conti. Myth page 2.*

Myth Continued:

a person with a formal education. For most applications in construction there is no need to ensure the 5,000 pound requirement on anchorages since the standard more or less compels the second approach in order to meet the requirement to not have workers exposed to an arrested impact of more than 1,800 pounds. It should be noted that all manufacturers understand the worker impact energy maximums and therefore construct their equipment accordingly.

For more information on qualified interpretations of the requirements of CFR 1926.502 contact the U.S Department of Labor, Directorate of Construction.

Article by Arizona Construction Training Alliance Inc. 2011, Vol. 1 Issue 1.



Just for the Record...The Importance of Site Documentation and Records Retention:

"I'll make a record of that." "What do the records say?" "That is going in the records"... Records are such an everyday part of speech, sometimes we lose sight of the real meaning of the word. It can permit us to locate information we need later, to substantiate a claim or to defend ourselves. In the course of business, there are many different records that will be kept--some required by law, some by regulation and some as a sound business practiced. So, what are some of the records that we need to have?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that we retain records of employee exposures to health hazards such as noise testing records, test for air contaminants, exposure to radiation or chemicals, etc. These records must be retained for 30 years. Employee exposure records are different than medical records. In the case of medical records, generally, they must be maintained for the length of the person's employment plus 30 years. Some standards may require longer retention periods. In the case of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), each worker must have their own training record.

Due to the nature of construction projects, there will be routine records such as change orders, contracts, daily work logs or journals. Some of these may be informal records such as a superintendent's handwritten daily job notes. Some of these may be more formal, such as lab reports on concrete, records of pressure tests of piping, etc. There will also be records of unusual events, such as accidents or incidents involving the public, traffic crashes in a highway work zone, etc.

How long will you need to keep those records? That is governed by the Statue of Repose in the area where you work. In some states, the Statue is two, four or five years or can be as long as 15 years. How long should records be retained? That depends on the record and the reason for keeping it. Your company should establish a business policy covering what records are retained, in what form and for how long. This should cut across several fields of specialty within the company, including IT, purchasing, field supervision, safety, human resources and medical, and be guided by your legal counsel. When records have reached the point where they are no longer required, the policy should provide for secure removal and disposal.

Is record documentation and retention important? It can be crucial to the survival of your company. One case involved a severe injury to a trespasser. The lawsuit, seeking \$21 million in damages, alleged negligence on the part of the contractor in controlling access to the project. Admitted at the trial was the superintendent's handwritten daily log indicating actions taken to control access, posting and repairing warnings and requests for police assistance. With the support of those records, it took a jury 23 minutes to decide the contractor had done no wrong. "And that's one for the record books"...

Zurich Vol. 4 Spring 2011 Construction Safety Council Newsletter; written by Curtis Childress, Training Consultant Zurich Services Corporation.

OSHA NEWS:

Regional Federal Fatality Report -

Weekly Totals of fatalities tabulated by region. 8 hours

FATALITIES FY 2011 - Since 10/01/10			
	Federal	State Plans	Region Total
Region I	12	1	13
Region II	35	10	45
Region III	35	11	46
Region IV	54	42	96
Region V	64	18	82
Region VI	75	2	77
Region VII	14	7	21
Region VIII	9	5	14
Region IX	1	56	57
Region X	2	6	8
Total Fatalities	301	158	459

Weekly Fatality Summary Reports:

Houston, TX 2/8/11 Worker was replacing a 120 psi hose for a compressor and was struck by the pressurized equipment.

Erie, Pa 2/12/11 Worker turned around a building corner and directly into the path of a front loader.

Houston, TX 2/16/2011 Worker performing stucco activities from a scaffold platform. Worker fell 14 feet.

Lufkin, TX 2/28/2011 A forklift was raising the dock leveler when it slipped and crushed the worker.

Lake Village, AR 3/2/2011 Two workers were in a manlift rigging a steel member hoisted by a crane when the boom collapsed and struck the manlift. Both workers fell 30 feet.

Birmingham, AL 3/2/2011 Worker was caught between stationary skid steer and a dump truck moving in reverse.

Additionally reports can be found at http://www.osha.gov/dep/fatcat/dep_fatcat.html