

Operating Guideline # 107
Fall Protection Gear Inspection
Created January 21, 2020
Reviewed June 16, 2022



PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to outline practices for the inspection of harnesses used for fall protection and to describe when harnesses need to be serviced or have parts repaired or replaced.

GUIDELINE:

1. Fall protection harnesses are mandated for use by several departmental OG's (SEE ALSO OG 217 – Fall Protection from Aerial Ladders and Platforms.
2. All harnesses used for fall protection shall be inspected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, which are found, with each harness. In all cases, the inspection shall include the following:
 - a) Inspect the Webbing - The web body of the harness shall be inspected before each use. Bend all web surfaces, a section at a time, and look for damage. Any cuts, broken fibers or frayed edges will show themselves on close inspection, and each of these will compromise your protection. Broken fibers will show up as fuzzy spots in the webbing. Check all stitching; none should be torn or loose. Check the color of all parts; if anything is faded, it might also be weakened.
 - b) Inspect the Hardware - Any bent or loose parts should be replaced. No metal grommets should be bent, distorted or missing. All rivets should be tight and undamaged. Buckles should not have any sharp edges or bent parts. Check all D rings and metal loops for cracks or distortion. Check to make sure nothing is loose.
 - c) Inspect Ropes and Lanyards - Inspect the entire rope and lanyard for damage, taking your time. Broken fibers are dangerous. Also check the rope's diameter; any spots that are thinner than the rest of the rope usually mean stress or damage. The rope should be of uniform thickness along its entire length. For lanyard straps, check for any loose or broken stitching. Also inspect all clips for cracks or distortion.
 - d) Check Your Installation - Although you may know that safety harness well enough to put it on correctly, a mistake can be fatal. A buddy system helps add a level of protection. Have a co-worker check your harness when you put it on, and check his over to make sure he didn't overlook anything.
3. The inspection log maintained with each harness is to be completed with each inspection conducted.
4. Where a harness is identified as being in need of repair or replacement, the Deputy Fire Chief is to be advised in writing (email or incident report) and shall make the necessary arrangements for repair/replacement as may be required.
5. Where any harness/rope/hardware piece is involved in a fall scenario and the gear "catches" an individual, the gear shall be sent to the manufacturer for inspection before being placed back into service or removed from service forever.

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If equipment shows any damage, or there are any doubts about the integrity of the harness, it shall be replaced.

RESPONSIBILITY:

It is the responsibility of all members to comply with the provisions of this OG and particularly that Company Officers (supervisors) and firefighters (workers) ensure that they adhere to their duties in accordance with the provisions of this document and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

DEFINITIONS:

“Harness” means a fall protection device comprised of webbing and hardware designed to provide for the safety of workers who are working at heights above grade and includes any associated lanyards, carabineers etc.

REFERENCES:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (RSO 1990, c. 0.1)
- Section 21 Committee Guidance Note GN-4-11, Fall Protection
- MLFD OG 217, Fall Protection from Aerial Ladders and Platforms
- MLFD OG 220, Climbing Hose Towers