

Working at Heights – Fall Rescue

When used properly, fall arrest equipment will prevent the user from striking the level below. However, a worker who falls wearing fall arrest equipment will be suspended in the air below the work surface and will be in need of rescue. **In the event of a fall, immediately notify the Fire Department by calling 911.**

(Note: All rescue procedures should be conducted in a safe manner, so as not to endanger the fallen employee or rescue personnel.)

The order of rescue options shall be as follows:

Self Rescue: if a person has sustained a short fall and is conscious, uninjured, and can reach the working surface safely, this option is acceptable.

Ladder or Aerial Work Platform Rescue: if self-rescue is not possible, the next option is the use of a ladder, “condor,” or scissor lift. This rescue depends upon the accessibility and condition of the person and the availability of appropriate equipment.

Fire Department Rescue: if the previous rescue options cannot be accomplished in a prompt and safe manner, the fire department personnel will rescue the person using advanced techniques.

The following guidelines apply to all 3 rescue options above:

- Establish verbal contact and continuously monitor the employee.
- Watch for signs or complaints of suspension trauma: faintness, nausea, breathlessness, dizziness, sweating, paleness, hot flashes, loss of vision or increased heart rate.
- Tell the suspended worker to keep his legs moving to increase circulation.
- Lower a rope with a loop tied in the end of it to the suspended worker. Have the worker step into the loop and stand up at regular intervals to remove pressure on his legs. This also enables him to shift his body weight around into a more comfortable position.
- After the event do not continue to use any of the Fall Protection Equipment involved in the incident. Tag it, “*Do Not Use*” and return it to the manufacturer, or cut it up and throw it away.
- Report all falls to your supervisor.