



TOTAL GROUP
SAFETY & EQUIPMENT GUIDE

Harness Inspection Checklist for Industrial Work: What to Check Before Each Use

Practical equipment guidance for industrial teams.

PUBLISHED

October 29, 2026

ONLINE GUIDE

<https://safetywearandrescue.ca/blogs/safety-equipment-guides/harness-inspection-checklist>

General information only. Confirm site-specific equipment decisions, applicable requirements, and manufacturer instructions before purchase or use.

Inspect the harness before use by checking its labels and any model-specific fall indicators, then examining the full length of webbing, stitching, D-rings, buckles, adjusters, and other hardware. If anything is damaged, altered, missing, illegible, contaminated, or questionable, remove it from use and have the decision handled under the manufacturer instructions and the applicable site process.

CCOHS MSA Safety

A harness is only one part of a personal fall-protection system. It should not be assessed in isolation from the connector, lanyard or lifeline, anchorage, application, fit, clearance, rescue planning, and site conditions. **CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems OSHA: Personal Fall Protection Equipment**

1 Key Takeaways

- Use this page as a practical pre-use prompt, then follow the instructions for the specific harness and components in service.
- Check identification, webbing, stitching, hardware, labels, and any model-specific fall or load indicators before use.
- Treat damage, alteration, missing or unreadable labels, unknown history, and a fall event as reasons to stop and escalate—not as field-repair decisions.
- Inspection timing and the person authorized to complete a formal review depend on the jurisdiction, site program, and manufacturer instructions.
- A harness check does not confirm that the full fall-protection or rescue arrangement is suitable for the work.

2 What should you check on a harness before industrial work?

A useful **harness inspection checklist** starts with the whole item, not just the most visible buckle. Check that the harness can be identified, then look across the full webbing and stitching, all fitted hardware, labels and warnings, and any indicator included on that model. The purpose is to identify concerns early and route them through the right process—not to create a universal pass/fail test for every harness.

For a high-visibility pre-use check, work through these categories and apply the equipment manufacturer's instructions for the specific item:

- **Identification and instructions:** Confirm that the manufacturer label and warnings are legible, that the model or asset identification is available where the site uses it, and that the relevant user instructions can be accessed.
- **Webbing and straps:** Examine the full surface and, where directed by the manufacturer, flex the webbing to help reveal damage.
- **Stitching:** Look for missing, broken, cut, pulled, or otherwise compromised stitches.
- **Hardware:** Check D-rings, buckles, adjusters, grommets, snaps, and other fitted hardware for damage and correct operation.
- **Indicators and alteration:** Check a fall or load indicator only if the harness is equipped with one; use the manufacturer's criteria. Do not cover, cut, punch, tape, or otherwise modify the harness.
- **Decision:** Stop using a harness with a suspected defect, an unknown history, a missing or illegible label, or evidence of a fall event. Escalate under the manufacturer instructions and the site process. CCOHS advises the wearer to inspect fall-protection equipment before each use. Requirements can be more specific by jurisdiction: for example, WorkSafeBC sets a qualified-person inspection requirement before each work shift in British Columbia, while OSHA's construction rule calls for an inspection before each use. These examples should not be treated as one rule for every Canadian or U.S. workplace.

CCOHS WorkSafeBC, Part 11 OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.502

3 Start by confirming the harness can be identified and used for the task

Begin with the label, warnings, and model information. Manufacturer information is important because it identifies the product and provides the limitations, fitting, care, and inspection guidance that apply to that harness. A label that cannot be read removes an important source of equipment-specific direction; it should be handled through the manufacturer and site process rather than guessed at.

CCOHS MSA Safety

Where a site uses an asset ID, model number, serial number, or inspection record, confirm that it matches the item. This supports traceability, but it does not establish suitability for the task. Application, connection, anchorage, clearance, and rescue remain broader system questions. CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems

4 Inspect every section of webbing for cuts, abrasion, heat, chemical exposure, and alteration

Visually examine and run your hands along the full length of each strap and webbing section. CCOHS and an OSHA-hosted inspection guide identify concerns such as cuts, fraying, abrasion, broken fibres, pulled threads, chemical damage, heat damage, and general deterioration. The OSHA-hosted guide also points to hard or shiny areas and unusual stretching as conditions requiring attention. CCOHS Harness Inspection Guidelines (PDF)

Check strap surfaces, edges, folds, and areas passing through hardware. Where the manufacturer directs the user to flex webbing, use that method for that product. Do not assume that cleaning, trimming, taping, or covering a concern restores serviceability. [CCOHS](#)

5 Check stitching, load or fall indicators, and keepers using the manufacturer instructions

Stitching secures critical webbing connections. Look for missing, cut, pulled, broken, or otherwise compromised stitches. CCOHS, MSA's manufacturer education, and the OSHA-hosted guide each identify stitching condition as part of a harness inspection. [CCOHS MSA Safety Harness Inspection Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)

Some harnesses include a model-specific fall or load indicator. Inspect it only when fitted and use the actual manufacturer instructions to determine what it means. Apply the same approach to keepers and other model-specific components; do not use a generic picture or another harness model to judge an indicator. [MSA Safety 3M Fall Protection Product Support](#)

6 Examine D-rings, buckles, adjusters, and other hardware for deformation, corrosion, cracks, sharp edges, and function

Inspect all fitted hardware, including D-rings, buckles, adjusters, grommets, snaps, and other metal or mechanical parts. Look for cracks, breaks, bends or distortion, corrosion, sharp edges, damaged grommets, and signs that a buckle, keeper, or other moving part does not function correctly. These are recognized inspection points in CCOHS and the OSHA-hosted guidance. [CCOHS Harness Inspection Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)

Operate hardware only as the manufacturer directs. Connection compatibility and anchorage remain broader fall-protection system decisions, not harness-only visual-check decisions. [CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems](#)

7 Verify labels, warnings, model information, and inspection records are legible and complete

Legible labels and warnings link the equipment to its use limitations, fitting, care, and inspection guidance. If they are missing or unreadable, do not substitute memory, a similar product, or an online image. Route the item for review through the manufacturer and site process. [CCOHS Harness Inspection Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)

Inspection records can support traceability. CCOHS recommends written records for the periodic inspection process; the manufacturer may set additional documentation expectations. A record should be site-approved and match the equipment range and jurisdiction. [CCOHS](#)

8 Remove damaged, questionable, or fall-loaded equipment from service—do not make field repairs

When a harness is damaged, altered, contaminated, missing a legible label, of unknown history, or otherwise questionable, remove it from use for review through the manufacturer and site process. Do not make a field repair or decide independently that a defect is acceptable. [CCOHS 3M Fall Protection Product Support](#)

A fall event also requires escalation. WorkSafeBC addresses removal from service after an arrested fall in British Columbia; OSHA's construction requirements address removal after impact and a competent-

person decision on return. Apply the rules that govern the workplace, together with manufacturer instructions and the site procedure; do not generalize either example. [WorkSafeBC, Part 11 OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.502](#)

9 Remember: the harness is one part of the complete fall-protection system

A pre-use full-body harness inspection does not establish that the complete system is ready. The task may also require decisions about the connector, lanyard or lifeline, anchorage, clearance, swing hazards, fit, training, and rescue planning. CCOHS describes fall arrest as a system and identifies clearance and rescue as broader considerations. OSHA's shipyard overview addresses these matters in that sector; its shipyard-specific requirements are not universal industrial rules. [CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems OSHA: Personal Fall Protection Equipment](#)

For equipment and technical support within the right system-level discussion, see [Fall Protection & Rescue](#). The suitability of any arrangement still needs to be confirmed for the application, equipment documentation, site program, and jurisdiction.

10 Use a site-approved inspection record and have a qualified reviewer confirm the final checklist

Separate the wearer's pre-use check from the site's periodic inspection and recordkeeping process. CCOHS states that a trained and competent person should inspect a harness yearly or more often, and recommends written records. That is not a universal interval; manufacturer guidance, jurisdiction, site program, and conditions may call for a different process. [CCOHS](#)

A site-approved record can include asset ID, manufacturer and model, serial number where applicable, inspection date, inspector, observations, disposition, and reviewer. Before use, a qualified reviewer should confirm that the fields and jurisdictional language fit the program. Manufacturer resources support this work but do not replace the item's instructions. [3M Fall Protection Product Support MSA Safety](#)

10.1 FAQs

10.2 What parts of a harness should be inspected?

Check identification and labels, webbing and straps, stitching, fitted hardware, and any model-specific fall or load indicator. Use the inspection points and acceptance criteria in the instructions for that harness. [CCOHS Harness Inspection Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)

10.3 What should I do if a harness is damaged or questionable?

Stop using it and follow the manufacturer instructions and site process for review, return-to-service decisions, or disposal. Do not field-repair or assume that a concern is minor. After an arrested fall, follow the applicable jurisdictional and manufacturer process before any equipment decision. [CCOHS WorkSafeBC, Part 11 OSHA, 29 CFR 1926.502](#)

10.4 Does a harness inspection include the lanyard and anchor?

A harness inspection is not complete system approval. The lanyard or lifeline, connector, anchorage, clearance, application, fit, and rescue planning require a broader assessment under the applicable instructions and site program. [CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems](#)

10.5 How often should formal inspections be completed?

There is no single interval for every workplace. CCOHS describes a yearly-or-more-frequent competent-person inspection and recommends records; jurisdictional requirements and manufacturer instructions may differ. Use the schedule for the equipment, location, and site program. [CCOHS](#)

10.6 Limitations and qualified-review note

This article provides general information only. It is not legal advice, a work procedure, a site assessment, engineering advice, rescue planning, product certification, or a substitute for manufacturer instructions. It does not provide fall-clearance calculations, anchor-selection or connector-compatibility instructions, repair methods, a universal service-life rule, or a universal PPE list. A qualified reviewer should confirm the equipment-specific instructions, site fall-protection program, standards references, and jurisdictional wording before this guidance is used or adapted. [CCOHS: Fall Arrest Systems CSA Z259.10:18 access point](#)

11 References

- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\): Body Belts, Harnesses, and Lanyards](#)
- [CCOHS: Fall Protection—Fall Arrest Systems](#)
- [WorkSafeBC: OHS Regulation, Part 11—Fall Protection](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\): 29 CFR 1926.502—Fall Protection Systems Criteria and Practices](#)
- [OSHA: PPE Selection—Personal Fall Protection Equipment](#)
- [3M: Fall Protection Product Support](#)
- [MSA Safety: Inspecting Your Safety Harness, Part I](#)
- [OSHA-hosted: Harness Inspection Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)
- [CSA Group: CSA Z259.10:18 Full Body Harnesses](#)

Discuss your requirements with Total Group. Our team can help you frame an equipment, inspection-record, and technical-support discussion that is appropriate for qualified review within your site program.

Publication gate: Qualified Total Group review is required before Shopify publication.