



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Improper Use of Fall Protection Anchorage Points Safety Message

Falls are a leading cause of injury in the workplace. As a result, a great deal of emphasis is put on fall protection systems. Anchor points are a major component of all fall protection systems; however, they are still often misused. This can lead to both injury and death. This safety talk identifies what an anchorage point is and identifies correct examples of safe work practices. The safe work practices listed below can guide individuals on how to select proper anchorage points and properly use them to prevent unwanted harm.

What is an Anchorage Point?

Anchorage points are components designed to prevent injury to employees in the event of a fall. It is the specific point where an anchoring device is affixed or attached to a supportive location. They must be of adequate strength and designed to support the weight of an individual in the event of a fall resulting in increased velocity. Ladder rungs and cable trays are inadequate, while I-beams and pad eyes can be two of many correct possibilities.

General Safe Work Practices

- Individuals in search of an adequate anchorage point should focus on areas above the head. Anchoring below the head should be avoided as it can lead to tripping, higher falls, and swing falls.
- Anchor points should be properly rated to support an individual. Facilities should provide an orientation prior to the start of work to identify specifically rated and staged anchor points. Individuals should ask for this orientation if it is not offered.
- Anchorage points should be inspected to ensure they are in proper condition.
- According to OSHA regulations, anchorage points must be able to support 5000 pounds per individual with a free fall of six feet or less.
- As a safety precaution, fall protection equipment should be inspected for wear and compromise before being donned and used in conjunction with any anchorage point. All components of fall protection systems must be used properly for the entire system to adequately protect individuals when falling.

Summary

General work practices can serve as a guideline for identifying ideal anchorage points and how to correctly use them. Proper training and location information are equally vital in the successful implementation of fall protection systems involving anchor point components.

Discussion points:

1. Identify both ideal and inadequate anchorage points in your work areas.
2. Why should an anchorage point be used above the head?