



Fall Protection and Training

How to Care for Your Fall Protection Harness

Brought To You by Honeywell | Aug 14, 2024

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Fall protection harnesses are essential equipment for workers who perform tasks at height, such as construction, roofing, or scaffolding. They are designed to protect the wearer from serious injury or death in case of a fall, by distributing the impact force over the body and connecting to a secure anchor point. However, like any other piece of personal protective equipment (PPE), fall protection harnesses require proper care and maintenance to ensure and maintain their safety and durability.

In this blog post, Honeywell will share some useful tips on how to clean and store your fall protection harnesses. They will also explain why it is important to inspect your harnesses regularly and replace them when necessary.

Why should you clean your fall protection harness?

During your work, your fall protection harness may get exposed to various sources of dirt, dust, grease, oil, chemicals, or moisture. These contaminants can affect the performance and lifespan of your harness, by weakening the webbing material, corroding the metal components, or damaging the stitching or labels. Moreover, a dirty harness can be uncomfortable and unhygienic to wear, especially if you share it with other workers.

Therefore, it is advisable to clean your fall protection harness periodically, depending on the frequency and conditions of use. Cleaning your harness will help you remove any dirt or stains that may impair its functionality or appearance and extend its service life. It will also give you an opportunity to inspect your harness for any signs of wear and tear that may compromise its safety.

How should you clean your fall protection harness?

The best way to clean your fall protection harness depends on the type and extent of the dirt. Honeywell provides two methods of cleaning for its Miller® brand harnesses: spot cleaning and manual washing. Here are the steps to follow for each method:

Spot cleaning: This method is suitable for removing light or localized dirt from your harness. You will need a damp sponge or cloth and a mild detergent. Simply apply the detergent to the sponge or cloth and wipe the affected area of the harness, then rinse it with plain water and let it air dry.

Manual washing: This method is suitable for removing heavy or widespread dirt from your harness. You will need a mesh laundry bag, a mild soap or detergent, a non-abrasive sponge, and a lint-free cloth. Place your harness in the mesh bag to prevent abrasion, snagging, or entanglement. Prepare a non-abrasive, non-corrosive solution with the soap or detergent and water. Avoid using bleach, chlorine, or abrasives, as they can damage the harness. Also, avoid using too much soap, as it can make the harness sticky. Never use acid solvents or solvent-based products, as they can ruin the material and make the harness unsafe. Wipe off any loose particles with a cloth before washing. Apply the solution to the sponge and scrub the harness back and forth, making a lather. Rinse the solution well with plain water. Do not soak the harness, as it can damage the material. Blot the excess moisture with the lint-free cloth. Hang the harness without folding and let it air dry away from heat and direct sunlight.

How should you store your fall protection harness?

After cleaning your fall protection harness, you should store it properly to protect it from damage or deterioration. Here are some tips on how to store your harness:

- Remove the harness from the mesh bag and hang it freely to dry, but not near heat, steam, or direct sunlight. Do not machine dry the harness, as it can shrink or deform the material.
- Use the harness only after it is completely dry. Do not store the harness wet, as it can promote mold growth or corrosion.
- Store the harness in a cool, dry, and well-ventilated place, away from direct sunlight, heat sources, chemicals, or sharp objects. Avoid folding, twisting, or compressing the harness, as it can damage the webbing or the metal parts.
- Label the harness with your name, date of purchase, and date of last inspection. This will help you keep track of the age and condition of your harness and prevent confusion if you share the storage space with other workers.

Why should you inspect your fall protection harness?

Before and after each use, you should inspect your fall protection harness for any signs of damage, wear, or malfunction that may affect its performance or safety. You should look for any cuts, tears, frays, burns, holes, abrasions, or stains on the webbing; any cracks, bends, dents, rust, or corrosion on the metal parts; any loose, broken, or missing stitches or labels; and any dirt, grease, oil, or chemicals that may impair the function of the buckles, D-rings, or snap hooks. You should also check the fit and adjustment of the harness, and make sure it is comfortable and secure.

If you find any defects or problems with your harness, you should remove it from service and contact your supervisor or Honeywell representative. Do not attempt to repair or modify the harness yourself, as it can void the warranty and compromise the safety. You should also follow the manufacturer's instructions for the frequency and procedure of formal inspections by a competent person. Honeywell recommends that you inspect your harness at least every six months, or more often depending on the conditions of use.

When should you replace your fall protection harness?

The lifespan of your fall protection harness depends on various factors, such as the frequency and intensity of use, the exposure to environmental conditions, the quality of care and maintenance, and the occurrence of any falls or impacts. Honeywell does not specify a fixed expiration date for its harnesses but advises that you replace them when they show signs of damage, wear, or malfunction, or when they have been subjected to a fall arrest. You should also follow the manufacturer's instructions for the proper disposal of your old or damaged harnesses.

Conclusion

Caring for your fall protection harness is not only a matter of hygiene, but also a matter of safety and performance. By following these tips on how to clean, store, inspect, and replace your harness, you can help ensure that your PPE is in good condition and ready to protect you from the hazards of working at height. Remember, your harness is your lifeline, so treat it well and it will serve you well.

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