SKILLSIGNAL™
Construction Safety & Compliance

TOOLBOX TALK

Lanyards: Six Feet of Webbing and Every Way to Ruin It

TOPIC NO.	DURATION	AUDIENCE
FP-08	**10 to 15 min**	**All Crew**

OSHA REFERENCE 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(5) to (d)(14) · 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(21) · ANSI/ASSP Z359.13 / Z359.14

PROJECT / JOBSITE	DATE	PRESENTED BY

01 THE HOOK

START HERE

A lanyard is the dumbest-looking piece of safety gear on your body. Six feet of webbing, a snap hook on each end, a little pouch in the middle. And it is doing the hardest job in the whole system: turning a falling body into a stopped body without breaking it. It has to hold 5,000 pounds. It has to stretch exactly the right amount. It has to survive sparks, sharp steel, sunlight, and being dragged through the mud by the same guy who kicks it under the truck seat at night. This talk is how to pick one, how to wear it, and the seven ways people quietly wreck them.

02 THE NUMBERS ON LANYARDS

NUMBER	WHAT	THE RULE
5,000 LB	**Breaking strength**	**29 CFR 1926.502(d)(9)**: lanyards and vertical lifelines must have a **minimum breaking strength of 5,000 pounds**. That is the number you are protecting every time you handle one.

NUMBER	WHAT	THE RULE
6 FT	**Max free fall**	**1926.502(d)(16)(iii)**: the system must be rigged so you **cannot free fall more than 6 feet** or hit a lower level. A 6-foot lanyard anchored at your feet gives you 12 feet of free fall. That is a violation and probably a fatality.
3.5 FT	**Max deceleration**	**1926.502(d)(16)(iv)**: the shock absorber may extend **no more than 3.5 feet** while it slows you down. Add that to your fall clearance (covered in FP-10).
1,800 LB	**Max arresting force**	**1926.502(d)(16)(ii)**: the force on your body may not exceed **1,800 pounds**. The shock-absorbing pack is what keeps it under that. A lanyard without one, or one that cannot deploy, can hit you with more.
2 FT	**Self-retracting**	**1926.502(d)(12)**: self-retracting lifelines that limit free fall to **2 feet or less** need 3,000 pounds tensile strength. Longer free fall, they must meet the full 5,000.

03 PICKING THE RIGHT LANYARD

MATCH IT TO THE JOB	THE WRONG LANYARD FOR THAT JOB
WELDING, TORCH CUTTING, GRINDING **Wire-rope or Kevlar-sheathed lanyard rated for hot work**	WELDING, TORCH CUTTING, GRINDING Standard nylon or polyester web. One spark burns through the stitching that holds 5,000 pounds
SHARP EDGES, STEEL, DECKING **Leading-edge rated lanyard or SRL (ANSI Z359.14 LE class), with the edge in mind when you rig**	SHARP EDGES, STEEL, DECKING A standard web lanyard draped over a deck edge. It cuts like a rope on a knife
NEAR ENERGIZED CONDUCTORS **Synthetic web lanyard (OSHA requires synthetic fiber for ropes and straps, 1926.502(d)(14))**	NEAR ENERGIZED CONDUCTORS Wire-rope lanyard. You just clipped a conductor to your back
LOW CLEARANCE **Shortest lanyard that lets you work, or a self-retracting lifeline anchored overhead**	LOW CLEARANCE A 6-foot shock-absorbing lanyard when there is 12 feet of clearance below you

The shorter the lanyard, the shorter the free fall, the lower the force, and the less clearance you need. **Always pick the shortest lanyard the work allows.** When the job needs more reach, that is a self-retracting lifeline question, not a longer-lanyard question.

04 SEVEN WAYS LANYARDS GET RUINED

HAZARD 1

THE SHOCK PACK ON THE WRONG END

The energy-absorbing pouch goes on the **harness end**, attached to your dorsal D-ring, unless the manufacturer says otherwise. On the anchor end, it can hang up on a beam or edge and never deploy. Then you take the full force.

HAZARD 2

A KNOT IN THE WEBBING

Never tie a knot in a lanyard. A knot can cut the strength of webbing or rope by up to half. Not to shorten it, not to attach it, not "just to keep it out of the way." If you find one knotted in the gang box, untie it and inspect it before it goes on anyone.

HAZARD 3

SNAP HOOKS CLIPPED TO THE WRONG THING

1926.502(d)(5) and (d)(6): only **locking snap hooks** (since 1998), and never hooked **to each other, to webbing or rope directly, to a D-ring already holding another hook, or to anything the gate can roll out of**. Snap hook to snap hook is a fall waiting for a sideways load.

HAZARD 4

THE LOOSE END DRAGGING

An unclipped lanyard trailing behind you trips you, gets caught in rotating equipment, or hooks a load being moved. **Keep the loose end in your hand or clipped to the parking attachment on your harness.** Never to the D-ring.

HAZARD 5

STORED IN THE SUN, THE CHEMICALS, OR THE TRUCK BED

UV breaks down synthetic webbing. Solvents, acids, and concrete dissolve it. Sharp tools in the same bin cut it. Hang it in the dry, out of sunlight, away from anything that can touch it.

HAZARD 6

USED AFTER IT CAUGHT SOMEBODY

1926.502(d)(19): a lanyard that has arrested a fall is **out of service** until a competent person clears it. A deployed shock pack is a destroyed shock pack. Look for the torn warning tag or the stretched stitching.

HAZARD 7

NOT INSPECTED BEFORE USE

1926.502(d)(21): inspect **before each use** for wear, damage, and deterioration. Run the webbing through your hands end to end. Check the stitching, the hooks, the gates, the pack. Thirty seconds. Any defect, it is tagged and gone.

⚠ **IF YOU CAN'T READ THE LABEL, IT'S DONE**

Every lanyard carries a label with the manufacturer, model, date, and rating. If the label is missing, faded, or burned off, you cannot prove what it is or how old it is, and neither can anyone else. Remove it from service. The same goes for any lanyard with cut fibers, melted spots, chemical stains, a stiff or glazed section, a bent hook, or a gate that does not snap shut on its own.

05 WHY IT MATTERS

[JOBSITE]

FOR THE CREW

Lanyards are the most abused gear on a site because they look tough. A crew that inspects them every morning and stores them right finds the burned strap before the fall does. Inspection records are the easiest fall-protection paperwork to produce when OSHA asks.

[INDIVIDUAL]

FOR YOU

Everything about your fall comes down to six feet of stitching. Do not knot it, do not burn it, do not clip it to the wrong thing, and do not use it after it has caught somebody. Thirty seconds of inspection beats a 1,800-pound surprise.

[HOME]

FOR LIFE OFF-SITE

Tow straps, tie-downs, climbing gear, tree-stand harnesses. Sunlight, chemicals, and knots ruin all of them the same way. Check your gear at home like you check it here.

06 TODAY'S DRILL

TODAY'S DRILL **HAND-OVER-HAND INSPECTION**

Everybody takes their lanyard and runs it through their hands end to end, slowly. Check webbing for cuts, burns, stiffness, and chemical stains. Check stitching. Check the shock pack is intact and the warning tag is not showing. Check both hooks: gate snaps shut on its own, lock engages, no bends. Read the label. Anything questionable gets tagged and handed to the foreman before anyone goes up.

07 CREW DISCUSSION

Take 2 minutes. Pick one.

1. Where do your lanyards spend the night? Truck bed, gang box, or hanging dry? What else is in there with them?
2. Has anyone here seen a knot in a lanyard on this site? What was it for?
3. Which job on this site has the wrong lanyard for the hazard right now: welding, sharp decking, low clearance?

08 ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

All attendees confirm they participated in this Toolbox Talk and understand the content covered.

NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

_____ Date: _____

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