

Fall protection Anchor Systems toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Fall protection Anchor Systems.



[Download a Fall protection Anchor Systems toolbox talk pdf](#)

Anchor points are important for workers, who are working at heights as part of a Fall protection system. A worker will connect their lifeline to an Anchor, which is the secure connection point for a Fall protection system. This Anchor point must be the right type and correctly installed to protect the worker from hitting the ground.

Why run this toolbox:

- Types of anchor points
- Strength requirements of anchor points
- Checking and maintaining equipment

Types of Anchor Points

Depending on the type of industry and work, different types of anchors are available. There are 3 basic types of Anchor systems for Fall protection:

1. **Designed Fixed Support** – these are load-related Anchors that are specifically designed, manufactured, and permanently installed for Fall protection purposes.
2. **Temporary Fixed Support** – Anchor systems that are designed to be connected to the structure, using specific installation instructions e.g. Mobile Anchor points that may be used by roofers.
3. **Existing Structural Features/Improvised Anchors** – these are not intended to be used as Anchor points. These may need to be verified by a qualified engineer or competent person to ensure that the anchor point has the adequate capacity to be used as an anchor point.

Strength Requirements of Anchors

Strength requirements of Anchors may change from country to country. For example in New Zealand, it is best practice for all anchors to be designed to sustain a minimum load of 15kN (1529 kilogram-force [kgf]) and all temporary anchors require a minimum breaking load of 22kN (2243 kilogram-force [kgf]). Strength of an anchor is also dependent on:

- Design
- Condition
- Orientation relative to the direction of loading
- Connection to the supporting structure
- The adequacy of the structure to resist the imposed loading

Things To Consider When Selecting an Anchor Point

- Free-fall and swing-fall distance - i.e. select an anchor that is directly above the worker to reduce the swing distance
- Inspect the Anchor points before tying off the Personal fall protection system
- Select an Anchor that the lifeline doesn't have to travel over a guard rail, walls, or other structures
- When using an improvised Anchor, make sure it is stable
- Where necessary, use softeners to protect connecting devices, lifelines, or lanyards from edges that could cut, chafe or abrade fall protection components

Don't Do the Following

- Use a damaged Anchor point
- Use temporary Anchors if permanent anchors are available
- Don't tie off to unstable structures - vents, guard rails, roof hatches, TV antennas, ladders, small pipes and ducts, chimneys
- Impose more weight than what the anchor point can hold - i.e. 1 anchor point - 1 person

Equipment Maintenance

Fall protection equipment and Anchor points should be inspected at least once a year by a competent person. Workers should also inspect their equipment prior to use, and should check for the following things:

- Abrasion, fraying, cuts, and wear on the Fall protection system
- If an Anchor has been replaced or repaired, check that it's been tested by a competent engineer

Key takeaways:

- *Check your equipment regularly*
- *Selecting the right Anchor point will help prevent falls and serious injury*
- *Selecting the wrong anchor point can result in serious injury or possibly death*

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