

DDSP Finds that Equipment Offering Fall Protection Saves Lives

By Renee Hartman, DDSP Safety Specialist

The Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Penn. (DDSP), Safety Office hears complaints about using safety equipment such as, “It’s a pain to put it on.” “There’s no way you can fall.” “It wears out my clothes and it’s not comfortable.” At DDSP, our response is “Yes, it can be a pain and takes time to put on, however, it’s a lot less painful than a fall.”

Thinking there is no way a person can fall from a hybrid crane, stock selector, or a genie boom is wrong. People are injured or killed every day from working at heights without fall protection. You may be able to recall these incidents:

- A DDC employee was putting stock away on racks at the C level when, for unknown reasons, he apparently undid the belt to his safety harness and

stepped onto the pallet. The pallet shifted and he fell 11 feet to his death.

- Another DDC employee, pulling stock from rack locations, decided not to connect to his lanyard. While working from a C level location, he blacked out, fell to the floor of the stock selector, and slid out into the rack system. The B level contained an empty pallet, which he hit on the way down, where he laid until he regained consciousness. Fortunately, he survived the fall but was out of work for several months with painful injuries.
- Both employees were good workers, but they both thought that fall protection equipment was safety overkill. They were wrong, and the price was high.
- And regarding the complaint that a harness wears out your clothing and it’s not comfortable-if the equipment is worn properly it’s not uncomfortable. Also, fall protection equipment companies are always coming out with new styles that are lighter weight and can easily adjust to



DDSP’s Kenneth Long is protected by a lanyard and a harness while picking items in the high-rise area.

fit all body types. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) developed the requirement for the use of fall protection equipment because a lot of employees have either died or been severely disabled as the result of not being protected in the workplace. These requirements are put in place to save your life.

So the next time you prepare to work where you’re required to wear fall protection, do it for yourself, your family, and in remembrance of those before you who weren’t offered that protection.

About OSHA

- *The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is responsible for ensuring workplace safety*
- *OSHA conducts inspections without advanced notice*
- *OSHA representatives inspect work areas for potentially hazardous working conditions*
- *The OSHA compliance officer also checks posting and record keeping practices*
- *After the inspection, OSHA representatives will meet with the employer and the employee representatives to discuss all unsafe or unhealthful conditions observed on the inspection and to inform the employer of his or her obligations with regard to any citations that may be issued*
- *For additional information about OSHA, visit www.OSHA.gov*

If you see a hazard, report it to your supervisor right away.
