

Rope grabs

List fall hazards on site

Explain dangers

With rope grabs, there are three basic hazards:

- attaching them the wrong way
- grabbing hold of them during a fall
- using them with the wrong size or type of rope

A rope grab attached upside down to a lifeline can't work properly. Instead of locking on the line, it will simply slide down.

Don't grab the device if you fall. This can prevent some grabs from working properly. Instead of stopping you'll slide to injury or death below.

Demonstrate as you talk

Rope grabs are technically known as fall arresters and must meet CSA requirements.

- When attaching a rope grab to a lifeline, always make sure the arrow on the grab points along the line to the anchor point.
- After putting the rope grab on the lifeline, give it a firm tug in the direction of a fall to make sure it engages.
- Ensure that lifeline and rope grab match. Rope grabs are designed to work with certain types and diameters of lifelines.

- Remember to tie a knot in your lifeline at the farthest point where you need to travel. The knot ensures that the rope grab will not run off the free end of your line.
- Some grabs have a "parking feature" that locks at a point on the lifeline that won't let you reach a fall hazard.
- On a vertical lifeline, always position the rope grab as high as possible above your D-ring to minimize free fall.

Also make sure you have clearance below. Fall arresters may slide down the lifeline as much as one metre before arresting your fall.

- Inspect rope grabs before use.
- Check for distortion
- rust
- moving parts that don't move easily
- sharp edges.

A rope grab that arrests a fall should be taken out of service and inspected and recertified for use.

Class AD versus Class ADP

Two fall arresters are typically used in construction: Class AD and Class ADP.

- Class AD attaches to the D-ring on the back of your harness. So does Class ADP. But ADP also includes a panic feature. The "P" is for "panic."
- The panic feature keeps the arrester locked on the lifeline, even if you grab hold of it.
- Class AD doesn't have this panic feature. But the CSA standard requires that AD arresters come with integral connectors (that attach to the harness) between 30 and 60 centimetres long (one and two feet). This makes it very difficult for a falling worker to reach around and grab the arrester.