



Harness D-Ring Locations—What Are They For?

One of the basic differences in some of the harnesses we sell is the multiple attachment points (D-rings) that can be found on a harness. It is very important to fully understand when to use different D-rings on a harness.

FALL ARREST: This is when a worker is exposed to a fall and potentially being suspended by their harness. The **ONLY** suitable connection point is the Dorsal (back) D-ring. If you fall, the safest way for you to fall is feet down and in as upright of a position as possible. If you take a free fall in the sternal (chest) D-ring or a side D-ring, your body is not designed to handle the awkward forces that are generated when you suddenly stop.

FALL RESTRAINT: This is when you prevent a worker from reaching the fall hazard entirely. In this scenario, a worker may utilize **ANY** of the 4 categories of D-rings, since no free fall can exist in this scenario. This category allows a worker to freely move about but is designed to stop them from getting to an exposed area where they could fall. A good example is a 50' rope with a manual rope grab (with the grab device set to keep a worker from getting to the roof edge).

WORK POSITIONING: This is when a worker is held in suspension so they may work freely with both hands. Rebar construction and tower work are two common fields where workers use positioning devices. In these cases, the positioning devices should be connected to the side rings of the harness for greatest comfort and work flexibility. Keep in mind, that when working in “work positioning” scenarios, you should always use a back-up Fall Arrest System (which would be attached to the back D-ring). If you have a ladder climbing device (steel

cable that runs up the middle of the ladder), you would use a “chest D-ring” (sternal) and this would protect you if you were to slip on the ladder rungs (OSHA does allow up to a 2’ free fall in a chest D-ring, anything more could be very jarring to the back). In this last example, your primary fall protection is the worker hanging onto the ladder and the backup is the ladder climbing device.

RESCUE/CONFINED SPACE: In these applications, either the back, chest or shoulder D-rings can be used (trying to keep the workers’ body as upright as possible). In the case of a rescue, you want to keep the worker’s body in a safe position during the rescue. As for some confined spaces, the manhole might be quite skinny, so using the “shoulder” D-rings helps keep the worker’s body in a good vertical position when lowering and raising.

NOTE: You will also notice that some harnesses have little black plastic triangles up along the chest straps (many brands use this concept). These are referred to as “lanyard keepers” and can be used to keep your single or double-legged lanyard in place when not using it (so it isn’t dragging on the ground or obstructing the employee when climbing a ladder). These are pretty flimsy rings, so you should not use them as another tie-off point.

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