



# TOOLBOX TALK



## TOPIC DISCUSSED:

### SUSPENSION TRAUMA



After a worker falls and is caught by his fall protection harness, the danger is not over. The fallen worker's blood circulation is restricted, causing a condition known as suspension trauma. While there is limited scientific research directly focused on suspension trauma, there is sufficient knowledge of the body's physiology to illustrate that this condition can be fatal.



## QUESTIONS:

1. Why is suspension trauma so dangerous?
2. How many minutes does the rescue team have to save a worker hanging in a harness?
3. Name a few items that can be done after the fall.

## TAKE A LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING:

WHAT IS

### SUSPENSION TRAUMA?

It occurs when a fallen worker hangs in a harness, causing straps to **RESTRICT BLOOD FLOW** in the legs. This can lead to reduced heart rate and oxygen deprivation in the brain.



Rescue should take place within **10 MINUTES** after falling and hanging in **THE HARNESS**



Handle suspended victims carefully to prevent post-rescue death from sudden blood flow. Avoid placing rescuers horizontally.

[ CONSCIOUS OR NOT ]

## AFTER THE FALL



### MOVE LEGS

Move legs in the harness and try to push against any footholds, such as relief straps.



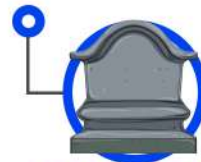
### GET LEGS HIGH

Try to get your legs as high as possible and your head as close to horizontal as possible.



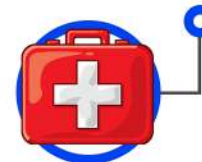
### HORIZONTAL POSTURE

If suspended upright, promptly move worker to horizontal or sitting position before rescue.



### POST-RESCUE DEATH

Rescuers to be aware of the post-rescue death, which may happen if the victim is moved too rapidly to a horizontal position.



### FIRST AID

Rescuers must be aware of the first aid measures to prevent suspension trauma.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO TAKE:



### RELIEF STRAPS

Trauma relief straps help workers stand by creating a loop, but are uncommon in South African safety harnesses.



### ONSITE WORK EQUIPMENT

Rescue team may provide ladder, aerial lift, or equipment for worker to stand on.



### STRUCTURAL MEMBER

Rescue team can relocate worker over structure, lower level, or ground.

