

Produced by the Access Industry Forum (AIF) and WAHSA, and supported by the Home Builders Federation.  
**IMPORTANT NOTE: Toolbox Talks are not intended to replace formal training but to supplement it.**

# INSPECTION, EXAMINATION AND STORAGE OF PERSONAL FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PFPE)

## What is the issue?

There are legal requirements for Personal Fall Protection Equipment (PFPE) to undergo periodic checks and examination.

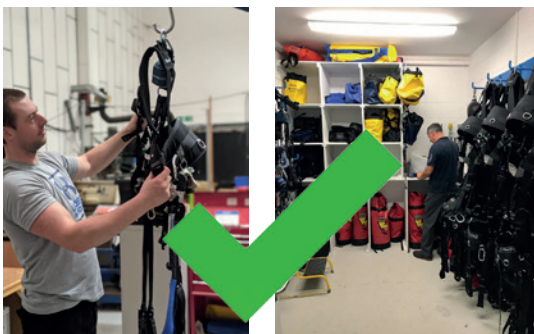
To maintain the safe condition of this life saving equipment, it must always be stored correctly when not in use.

Inadequate storage or lack of checks and examination can result in death or life changing injuries, therefore appropriate care of the equipment is critical to maintain a safe system of work.

## Inspection, examination and storage - KEY POINTS

- **Check the equipment is compliant.** Has it got a CE Mark or UKCA Mark?
- **Pre-use checks must be carried out by the user before each use** to identify defects such as cuts, abrasions, burns and corrosion. Function checks of hardware items such as karabiners or hooks must be performed.
- **Formal inspections must be carried out at statutory intervals by a trained and authorised person.** These intervals must not exceed 6 months. In many cases, where equipment is being used in arduous conditions (e.g. scaffolding), this frequency should be increased, often being conducted every 3 months.
- **Formal inspections must be recorded and the records must be maintained.**
- **When not in use, the equipment must be stored in a suitable location that prevents damage.** The storage should be located in a cool, dry, aired place away from contact with direct sunlight and vermin. It should be stored away from any other equipment or substances that could cause damage.

## Examples of good and bad practice...



## Examples of harness defects...



Nicks into load bearing webbing can lead to the webbing tearing across the weave when under load.



Abrasions on webbing are one of the most common forms of damage, however they can have a dramatic effect on the load bearing capacity.



Any webbing which has been cut must be removed from service immediately.



Webbing which has been exposed to elevated temperatures will stiffen and distort.



Webbing which has come into contact with hot material will melt and should be removed from service immediately.



PPE must not be modified without approval by the manufacturer, any changes may affect the integrity or function of the item.

### PICTURED LEFT:

**GOOD PRACTICE** - correct inspection & storage

**BAD PRACTICE** - poor storage (loose in van)

## 5 KEY POINTS

1. Understand the legal requirements for PFPE
2. Check the PFPE is compliant
3. Ensure the equipment is stored correctly
4. Always carry out pre-use checks before every use
5. Carry out formal inspections at statutory intervals, by a trained person, and make sure they are recorded

## Useful references:

- WAHSA Practical Guidance Notes PGN02 & PGN06
- Download Guidance Notes from [www.wahsa.org.uk](http://www.wahsa.org.uk)

