Fall protection—Rope grabs

List fall hazards on site:

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Explain dangers

With rope grabs, there are three basic hazards:

1. Attaching them the wrong way
2. Using them with the wrong size or type of rope
3. Using a damaged or malfunctioning rope grab

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

Identify controls

Rope grabs are known as fall arresters and must meet the requirements found in CSA-Z259.2.5: *Fall arresters and vertical lifelines*.

Fall arresters are classified and labelled as follows:

- **Automatic fall arresters** – These can move freely along the lifeline according to the position of a worker. They lock automatically if you fall.
- **Manual fall arresters** – These are always locked in position and require action by the worker to move it along the lifeline.

Fall arresters were previously classified as AD and ADP. Class ADP arresters include a panic feature, which keeps the arrester locked on the lifeline, even if you grab hold of it. (The "P" is for "panic.") Class AD fall arresters are no longer allowed to be used. All fall arresters are required to have a panic feature.

Demonstrate

Using a rope grab and lifeline, demonstrate the following as you talk:

- When attaching a rope grab to a lifeline, always make sure the arrow on the device points along the lifeline towards the anchor point (see image). Most rope grabs are now manufactured with an integral lanyard and shall be no longer than 76.2 cm (30 in.) in length when used on a vertical lifeline.
- After putting the rope grab on the lifeline, give it a firm tug in the direction of a fall to make sure it engages.
- Some rope grabs have a "parking feature" that locks at a point on the lifeline that will not let you reach a fall hazard.
- Ensure that the lifeline and rope grab match. Rope grabs are designed to work with certain types and sizes (in diameters) of lifelines. Specifications are usually listed in the manufacturer's instructions or on the housing of the robe grab.
- A vertical lifeline must extend to the ground or have a positive stop to prevent the rope grab from running off the end of the lifeline. All standard lifelifes should have a manufactured stopping device that functions as a positive stop. **Remember that only one person at a time may use a vertical lifeline.**
- Position the rope grab on a vertical lifeline as high as possible above your D-ring to minimize free fall distance.
- Make sure you have enough clearance below. Rope grabs may slide down the lifeline as much as 1 m (3.3 ft.) before arresting a fall.
- Inspect rope grabs before use. Check for distortion, rust, sharp edges, and moving parts that do not work easily.
- A rope grab that arrests a fall should be taken out of service until it can be inspected and recertified for use.