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**Code of practice for selection, use and
maintenance of personal fall protection
systems and equipment for use in
the workplace**



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Contents

	Page
Foreword	vi
Introduction	1
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	2
3 Terms and definitions	2
4 Legislation	5
4.1 General	5
4.2 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	6
4.3 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	6
4.4 The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992	6
4.5 The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)	6
4.6 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015	7
4.7 HSE Guidance documents	7
5 Fundamental principles	8
5.1 Hazard identification and risk assessment, and hierarchy of protective measures	8
5.2 Principles of selection of personal fall protection systems and equipment	8
5.3 Principles of use of personal fall protection systems and equipment	9
5.4 Principles of maintenance of personal fall protection systems and equipment	10
6 Hazard identification, risk assessment and safety method statement	11
6.1 General	11
6.2 Hierarchy of protective measures for people working at a height	13
<i>Table 1 — Illustration of hierarchy of protective measures given in the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)</i>	13
7 Selection of personal fall protection systems and equipment	14
7.1 General	14
7.2 Types of personal fall protection systems and equipment	15
8 Restraint systems	16
8.1 General	16
8.2 Selection of the components of a restraint system	17
8.3 Use of restraint systems	17
<i>Figure 1 — Example of a restraint system limiting access to zones where the risk of a fall exists</i>	19
<i>Figure 2 — Importance of correct lanyard length in a restraint system</i>	20
<i>Figure 3 — Example of a restraint system using a rigid horizontal anchor line</i>	22
<i>Figure 4 — Dangers of using a restraint system to access the corner of a flat roof</i>	23
<i>Figure 5 — Situation in which a restraint system should not be used because there is a risk of a fall through a fragile material</i>	24
<i>Figure 6 — Limitations and dangers of using a restraint system on a sloping roof</i>	25
9 Fall arrest systems	26
9.1 General	26
<i>Figure 7 — Examples of different types of fall arrest system</i>	27
<i>Figure 8 — Use of an extension lanyard</i>	32
<i>Figure 9 — Illustration of free fall distances and the calculation of fall factors</i>	33
<i>Figure 10 — Illustration of the dangers of connecting energy absorbing lanyards in series to increase overall length</i>	34
9.2 Fall arrest systems based on one or more energy absorbing lanyards	35
<i>Figure 11 — Example of a fall arrest system based on a single energy absorbing lanyard</i>	36
<i>Figure 12 — Examples of energy absorbing lanyards</i>	37
<i>Figure 13 — Illustration of an energy absorbing lanyard operating to arrest a fall</i>	38

	<i>Figure 14 — Limitations and dangers of using a single energy absorbing lanyard where a range of movement greater than lanyard length is required</i>	38
	<i>Figure 15 — Ensuring continuous connection to the structure by using two energy absorbing lanyards in relay</i>	40
	<i>Figure 16 — Example of the use of a fall arrest system based on a twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyard while climbing</i>	41
9.3	Fall arrest systems based on a retractable type fall arrester	41
	<i>Figure 17 — Fall arrest system based on a retractable type fall arrester</i>	42
	<i>Figure 18 — Example of a retractable type fall arrester operating to arrest a fall</i>	44
	<i>Figure 19 — Maximum working length of a retractable type fall arrester</i>	45
	<i>Figure 20 — Examples of a compact retractable type fall arrester</i>	47
	<i>Figure 21 — Example of a retractable type fall arrester incorporating a rescue winch</i>	49
	<i>Figure 22 — Example of a retractable type fall arrester incorporating a rescue winch being used in conjunction with a tripod for work in a confined space below the surface</i>	50
	<i>Figure 23 — Dangers of using retractable type fall arresters in the horizontal plane</i>	52
	<i>Figure 24 — Risk of a free fall if the lanyard of a retractable type fall arrester fails to retract</i>	54
9.4	Fall arrest systems based on a vertical anchor line and a guided type fall arrester	55
	<i>Figure 25 — Example of a fall arrest system based on a rigid vertical anchor line fixed to a permanently installed access ladder</i>	57
	<i>Figure 26 — Example of a fall arrest system based on a permanently installed flexible vertical anchor line fixed to a permanently installed access ladder</i>	58
	<i>Figure 27 — Example of a fall arrest system based on a temporarily installed flexible vertical anchor line</i>	59
9.5	Fall arrest systems based on a horizontal anchor line and one or more travellers	63
	<i>Figure 28 — Fall arrest system based on a permanently installed rigid horizontal anchor line comprising a rail</i>	64
	<i>Figure 29 — Fall arrest system based on a permanently installed flexible horizontal anchor line comprising a wire rope</i>	65
	<i>Figure 30 — Fall arrest system based on a temporarily installed flexible horizontal anchor line</i>	66
	<i>Figure 31 — Examples of fall arrest systems based on a horizontal anchor line and an energy absorbing lanyard operating to arrest a fall, also illustrating free space requirements (see and Annex F)</i>	68
9.6	Use of fall arrest systems	73
9.7	Free space	74
	<i>Figure 32 — Illustration of minimum free space requirements when using a fall arrest system based on an energy absorbing lanyard</i>	76
	<i>Figure 33 — Illustration of minimum free space requirement when using a fall arrest system based on a retractable type fall arrester</i>	78
	<i>Figure 34 — Illustration of minimum free space requirement when using a fall arrest system based on a vertical anchor line</i>	79
10	Work positioning systems	80
10.1	General	80
10.2	Work positioning systems for partial support	80
	<i>Figure 35 — Partially supported work positioning technique 1</i>	81
	<i>Figure 36 — Illustration of a real situation showing incorrect use of a work positioning lanyard without a safety back-up personal fall protection system</i>	82
	<i>Figure 37 — Partially supported work positioning technique 2</i>	84
10.3	Work positioning systems for work in suspension	85
	<i>Figure 38 — Examples of lanyards for work positioning technique 1</i>	86
11	Rescue	87

11.1	General	87
11.2	Anchors	88
11.3	Edges	88
11.4	Care of individuals requiring rescue	88
11.5	Rescue equipment	88
11.6	Harness for rescue	89
11.7	First aid	89
12	Components	89
12.1	General	89
12.2	Strength of components	90
12.3	Textiles used in components	91
12.4	Metals used in components	92
12.5	Connectors	93
	<i>Figure 39 — Examples of various types of connectors</i>	94
	<i>Figure 40 — Examples of correct and incorrect methods of connecting to an anchor point or position</i>	95
	<i>Figure 41 — Examples of ways in which the safety catch on a connector can be tripped accidentally</i>	97
	<i>Figure 42 — Difference in the loading of a connector in a static test and when used with a wide webbing sling</i>	98
	<i>Figure 43 — Correct and incorrect ways of inserting two anchor lines into a connector</i>	99
12.6	Body-holding devices	100
	<i>Table 2 — Advantages and disadvantages of various connector gate closing and locking mechanisms</i>	101
	<i>Figure 44 — Example of a waist belt for use with a restraint system</i>	102
	<i>Figure 45 — Example of a full body harness</i>	103
	<i>Figure 46 — Examples of sit harnesses</i>	104
12.7	Lanyards	104
	<i>Figure 47 — Example of a lanyard with thimbles in the termination loops</i>	105
12.8	Energy absorbers	105
12.9	Anchor lines	106
12.10	Anchor line devices	108
	<i>Figure 48 — Examples of anchor line devices</i>	108
13	Inspection, care and maintenance of equipment	109
13.1	General	109
13.2	Lifespan	110
13.3	Textile equipment (anchor lines, lanyards, harnesses etc.)	110
13.4	Metal equipment (connectors, anchor line devices etc.)	111
13.5	Protective helmets	112
13.6	Disinfection of equipment	112
13.7	Equipment exposed to a marine environment	112
13.8	Storage	112
13.9	Equipment withdrawn from service	112
13.10	Alterations to equipment	112
14	Methods of work	112
14.1	Safe working methods	112
14.2	Working practices	114
14.3	Clothing and protective equipment	115
14.4	Safety precautions for personal fall protection equipment	117
14.5	Use of tools and other work equipment	117
14.6	Communications systems	118

14.7	Protection of other people	118
14.8	Completion of work at the end of a shift	118
15	Aptitude, fitness and training	118
15.1	General	118
15.2	Training	119
16	Anchors	119
16.1	General	119
16.2	Strength and reliability of anchors	120
16.3	Installation of anchor devices	121
	<i>Figure 49 — Example increase loading on an anchor line/sling by increase in angle at the anchor point</i>	123
16.4	Additional recommendations for anchor points for particular types of personal fall protection equipment	124
	<i>Figure 50 — Example of a restraint system using a flexible horizontal anchor line, showing deflection of the anchor line by the user</i>	125
16.5	Intermediate support brackets for vertical and horizontal rigid anchor lines	125
16.6	Choosing anchor point positions for fall arrest systems	125
	<i>Figure 51 — Danger of a swing fall when using an energy absorbing lanyard</i>	127
	<i>Figure 52 — Danger of a swing fall when using a retractable type fall arrester</i>	128
	<i>Figure 53 — Examples of correct anchor positions and of incorrect (potentially dangerous) anchor positions</i>	129
Annex A	(informative) Basic principles of protection against falls from a height	130
Annex B	(informative) Harness comfort and adjustability test	130
Annex C	(informative) Equipment inspection checklist	133
	<i>Table C.1 — Equipment inspection checklist</i>	133
Annex D	(informative) Suspension intolerance (formerly known as suspension trauma)	138
Annex E	(informative) Advantages and disadvantages of differently positioned attachment points for fall arrest equipment on a full body harness	140
Annex F	(informative) Examples of the calculation of minimum free space requirements for different fall arrest systems	143
	<i>Table F.1 — Example of calculation of minimum free space requirements for a fall arrest system based on an energy absorbing lanyard</i>	144
	<i>Table F.2 — Example of calculation of minimum free space requirement for a fall arrest system based on a retractable type fall arrester</i>	145
	<i>Table F.3 — Example of calculation of minimum free space requirements for fall arrest systems based on a vertical anchor line</i>	145
	<i>Table F.4 — Example of calculation of minimum free space requirements for fall arrest systems based on a horizontal anchor line and an energy absorbing lanyard</i>	146
Annex G	(informative) Typical methods of work in a partially supported position using a work positioning system	146
	<i>Figure G.1 — Example of correct alignment of connector in side waist attachment point on user's harness</i>	148
	<i>Figure G.2 — Potential swing falls into structure while using work positioning technique 1, assuming that the work positioning lanyard does not slide down the structure</i>	149
Annex H	(informative) Properties of some of the artificial fibres used in the manufacture of personal fall protection equipment	150

	<i>Table H.1 — Resistance to chemicals of some of the artificial fibres used in the manufacture of personal fall protection equipment</i>	151
	<i>Table H.2 — Other properties of some of the artificial fibres used in the manufacture of personal fall protection equipment</i>	157
Annex I	(informative) The effect of wind speed and working height on available working times	158
	<i>Table I.1 — Available working time in an 8 h shift at different wind speeds</i>	158
	Bibliography	159

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages I to VIII, pages 1 to 160, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 August 2022. It was prepared by Technical Committee PH/5, *Personal fall protection*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 8437:2005+A1:2012, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

This standard has been produced in response to the need to bring together best practice regarding personal fall protection from a large number of sources including information from manufacturers, from research studies and from training organizations.

The standard applies to the use of personal fall protection systems and equipment in the workplace only, where the prime activity is the work being undertaken. It is not intended to cover, for example, leisure activities or emergency evacuation systems and their procedures. Nevertheless, those engaged in other activities would probably benefit from the advice given in this standard, as many of the principles do apply and offer good practice. This standard is not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in arboriculture.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) participated in the development of the original Standard and were consulted as part of this update.

This new edition of BS 8437 incorporates technical changes only. It does not represent a full review or revision of the standard, which will be undertaken in due course.

This publication can be withdrawn, revised, partially superseded or superseded. Information regarding the status of this publication can be found in the Standards Catalogue on the BSI website at bsigroup.com/standards, or by contacting the Customer Services team.

Where websites and webpages have been cited, they are provided for ease of reference and are correct at the time of publication. The location of a webpage or website, or its contents, cannot be guaranteed.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately competent and experienced people for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

Where words have alternative spellings, the preferred spelling of the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary is used (e.g. “organization” rather than “organisation”).

Contractual and legal considerations

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Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

In particular, attention is drawn to the statutory regulations listed in [Clause 4](#).

Introduction

Falls from a height are one of the largest causes of death and injury in the workplace. It is therefore essential that measures are taken to protect workers against falls from a height. These can include measures taken at the design stage, for example in the design of a new building, collective fall protection measures such as barriers and guard rails, and the use of personal fall protection systems and equipment. It is equally essential that the fall protection measures adopted are appropriate to the particular situation, that any fall protection system or equipment is correctly maintained and that users have appropriate training.

If a person working at a height, for example on a roof-top or tower, suffers a fall such that they lose contact with the surface on which they are supported, for example by stumbling over an edge, they will almost certainly hit the ground, or any intervening obstruction, with sufficient force to cause severe or fatal injuries. The severity of the injuries will be determined by the person's impact velocity, which will depend on the height of the fall, the nature of the impact surface and the part of the body that strikes the surface. The injuries are actually caused by the forces resulting from the rapid rate of deceleration of the body at impact.

NOTE A fall of 3.05 m (10 ft) takes only 0.8 s, giving no time for the person falling to react, and results in an impact velocity of 7.74 m/s (17.3 mph).

The severity of injury does not only depend on the height of the fall. While serious or fatal injuries can result from impact from a high fall onto a solid surface, they can also result from the following:

- impact from a relatively short fall onto, or through, a fragile surface;
- a head-first impact from a relatively short fall;
- a relatively short fall into water or a hazardous substance.

The present standard deals with personal fall protection systems in the context of a hierarchy of fall protection measures. It provides details of the types of fall protection systems and equipment available and gives guidance on their selection, use and maintenance, and on the training of users.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations and guidance on the selection, use and maintenance of personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in the workplace to prevent and/or to arrest falls from a height, including systems and equipment suitable for use in rescue. It also gives guidance on rescue of persons working at a height, in the event of an accident.

It is intended for use by employers, employees and self-employed persons who use personal fall protection systems and equipment. It is also intended for use by designers, e.g. architects and structural engineers, including those who are responsible for the design of safe access routes on buildings and structures, by those who commission work at a height, e.g. building owners and contractors, and by those involved in training persons for work at a height.

The standard is not applicable to collective fall protection systems, for example work platforms and fall arrest nets. It is not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in leisure activities or in professional or private sports activities. It is also not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in arboriculture.

NOTE 1 A discussion of the basic principles of fall protection is given in [Annex A](#).

NOTE 2 Recommendations and guidance on the use of rope access methods are given in [BS 7985](#).

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes provisions of this document¹⁾. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

[BS 7985](#), *Code of practice for the use of rope access methods for industrial purposes*

BS EN 353-1, *Personal fall protection equipment – Guided type fall arresters including an anchor line – Part 1: Guided type fall arresters including a rigid anchor line*

BS EN 353-2, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Part 2: Guided type fall arresters including a flexible anchor line*

BS EN 354, *Personal protective equipment – Lanyards*

BS EN 355, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Energy absorbers*

BS EN 358, *Personal protective equipment for work positioning and prevention of falls from a height – Belts and lanyards for work positioning or restraint*

BS EN 360, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Retractable type fall arresters*

BS EN 361, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Full body harnesses*

BS EN 362, *Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Connectors*

BS EN 363, *Personal fall protection equipment – Personal fall protection systems*

BS EN 795, *Protection fall protection equipment – Anchor devices*

BS EN 813, *Personal fall protection equipment – Sit harnesses*

BS EN 1497, *Personal fall protection equipment – Rescue harnesses*

BS EN 1891:1998, *Personal protective equipment for the prevention of falls from a height – Low stretch kernmantel ropes*

BS EN ISO 1140, *Fibre ropes – Polyamide – 3-, 4-, 8- and 12-strand ropes*

BS EN ISO 1141, *Fibre ropes – Polyester – 3-, 4-, 8- and 12-strand ropes*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this British Standard, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1 body-holding devices

3.1.1 full body harness

body-holding device primarily for fall arrest purposes, i.e. a component of a fall arrest system which comprises straps, fittings, buckles or other elements, suitably arranged and assembled to support the whole body of a person and to restrain the wearer during a fall and after the arrest of a fall

NOTE 1 Adapted from BS EN 361:2002.

NOTE 2 A full body harness may be incorporated into a garment.

¹⁾ Documents that are referred to solely in an informative manner are listed in the Bibliography.

3.1.2 sit harness

body-holding device comprising straps, fittings and buckles or other elements in the form of a waist belt with a low attachment element and connected supports encircling each leg, suitably arranged to support the body of a conscious person in a sitting position

NOTE 1 A sit harness may be fitted with shoulder straps and/or may be incorporated into a garment.

NOTE 2 Adapted from BS EN 813:1997.

3.2 anchorages

3.2.1 anchor

fixture or place for the secure attachment of anchor lines or persons

NOTE An eyebolt is an example of a fixture and a steel beam is an example of a place.

3.2.2 anchor point

part of an anchor to which other equipment in a personal fall protection system is attached

3.2.3 anchor device

element, or series of elements or components, of a personal fall protection system, which incorporates an anchor point or anchor points

NOTE Adapted from BS EN 795:1996.

3.2.4 structural anchor

element or elements, permanently secured to a structure, to which an anchor device or equipment for personal fall protection can be attached

NOTE Adapted from BS EN 795:1996.

3.3 connectors

3.3.1 connector

openable device used to connect components, which enables the user to link themselves directly or indirectly to an anchor point

3.3.2 karabiner

connector, formed as a complete loop, with a spring-loaded gate often safeguarded in the closed position by a screwed sleeve or automatic locking device

NOTE A karabiner in which the gate is safeguarded in the closed position by a screwed sleeve is known as a "screwgate karabiner".

3.3.3 screwlink connector

connector that is closed by a threaded sleeve which is the load-bearing part of the connector when fully screwed up

NOTE Also known as a "maillon rapide" (pronounced my-yon rapeed) or a "quicklink".

3.3.4 gate

part of a connector which can be moved to open it

NOTE 1 Sometimes referred to as a "keeper".

NOTE 2 A gate can move, for example, by pivoting about a hinge (known as a hinged gate), or by a sliding motion (known as a sliding gate) or by a screw motion (known as a screw-motion gate).

NOTE 3 The term “gate” is sometimes also used to refer to the opening in the connector.

3.4 anchor line

flexible or rigid line connected at least at one end to a reliable anchor to provide, as part of a personal fall protection system, a means of fall protection or support

3.5 anchor line devices

3.5.1 anchor line device

device which accompanies the user along an anchor line

3.5.2 traveller

anchor line device which travels in the broadly horizontal plane on a horizontal anchor line system and is intended to act as a mobile anchor point

3.5.3 guided type fall arrester

anchor line device with a fall arrest and self-locking function, which travels along an anchor line without requiring manual adjustment by the user, during upward or downward changes of position

3.6 energy absorber

component or set of components in a fall arrest system, designed to minimize the impact force generated in a fall

NOTE Also known as a “shock absorber”.

3.7 lanyard

connecting element or component of a personal fall protection system consisting of flexible material with at least two ready-to-use terminations, with or without an adjustment device

NOTE 1 This includes round slings.

NOTE 2 A lanyard may be made, for example, from synthetic fibre rope, wire rope, chain or webbing.

3.8 retractable type fall arrester

fall arrest device with an encased flexible, extendable lanyard, that has a self-braking and locking function and an automatic return facility for the lanyard into the casing

NOTE 1 An energy dissipating function may be incorporated in the device itself or an energy absorber may be incorporated in the lanyard.

NOTE 2 Adapted from BS EN 360:2002.

3.9 loads

3.9.1 working load limit (WLL)

maximum load that can be lifted by an item of equipment under conditions specified by the manufacturer

3.9.2 safe working load (SWL)

maximum working load of an item of equipment under specified conditions, as designated by a competent person

NOTE The competent person may be the user.

3.9.3 maximum rated load

maximum mass, in kilograms, of personnel, including tools and equipment carried, that may be supported by a component of a personal fall protection system, as specified by the manufacturer

NOTE [BS 8610](#), for example, uses the term “maximum rated mass”.

3.9.4 minimum rated load

minimum mass in kilograms of personnel, including tools and equipment carried, that may be supported by a component of a personal fall protection system, as specified by the manufacturer

NOTE [BS 8610](#), for example, uses the term “maximum rated mass”.

3.9.5 minimum breaking load

minimum load at which an item of equipment breaks when it is tested new, under specific conditions

3.9.6 proof load

test load applied to verify that an item of equipment does not exhibit permanent deformation or other defect under that load, at that particular time

3.10 competent person

designated person suitably trained or qualified by knowledge and practical experience to enable the required task or tasks to be carried out properly

3.11 rigging for rescue

establishing a rescue system which enables workmate retrieval to take place without the need for a rescuer to descend or ascend to the position of the injured person

[SOURCE: International Code of Practice for Industrial Rope Access [\[1\]](#)]

4 Legislation

4.1 General

Attention is drawn to the following acts and regulations, and HSE approved codes of practice (ACoP) and guidance.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 [\[2\]](#).

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM Regulations) [\[3\]](#), SI 2007/320 and *Guidance on Regulations* (L153, 2015) [\[4\]](#)

Work at Height Regulations 2005 SI 2005/735 (WAHR) as amended by the Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007 SI 2007/114 [\[5\]](#), and guidance *Working at height A brief guide* (HSE INDG 401 rev2) [\[6\]](#).

Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 [\[7\]](#).

Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981 [\[8\]](#).

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) SI 1998/2307 [\[9\]](#) and ACoP and Guidance *Safe use of lifting equipment 1998* (HSE L113, Second edition) [\[10\]](#).

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW Regulations) SI 1999/3242 (as amended) [\[11\]](#).

Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (PPE) SI 1992/2966 [\[12\]](#) and amendments, and guidance document *Personal protective equipment at work 1992* (HSE L25, Third edition) [\[4\]](#).

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) SI 1998/2306 [13] and ACoP and Guidance *Safe use of work equipment* (HSE L22, Fourth edition) [14].

Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 SI 1992/3004 as amended [15] and ACoP and Guidance *Workplace health, safety and welfare* (HSE L24, Second edition) [16].

4.2 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 [2] places general duties on employers, clients, contractors, owners, the self-employed and employees. Many regulations have been made under this Act, which expand on these duties, some dealing specifically with particular issues, such as first aid and protection of eyes. Other regulations made under the Act include, for example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 [11].

4.3 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 [11] require employers, in entrusting tasks to employees, to take account of their capabilities as regards health and safety.

These require a risk assessment (*see Risk assessment: A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace* [17]) and highlight the duties of clients, owners and designers of structures to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, any work to be carried out in the workplace can be performed safely. It is the duty of every employer to ensure that they comply with all legal safety requirements relating to the type of work being undertaken and to work in the particular location concerned.

NOTE 1 If there are fewer than five employees, written records are not necessary, however, it is useful to do this in order to review at a later date (INDG163 [17]).

NOTE 2 Advice on managing contractors can be found in Using contractors – A brief guide (INDG368, 2013, HSE [18]).

4.4 The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992

The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 [12] require employers to provide suitable personal protective equipment, which includes some protective clothing. The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 [12] also require any employee to use any personal protective equipment provided in accordance with both any training and any instructions.

4.5 The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

4.5.1 Organization and planning

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 4) [5] require that work at height be properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in a manner which is safe. This includes planning for emergencies and rescue. In addition, employers have a duty to ensure that work at a height is carried out only when the weather conditions do not jeopardize the health or safety of persons involved in the work.

4.5.2 Avoidance of risks from work at a height

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 6) [5] require every employer to take account of a risk assessment under the MHSW Regulations (Regulation 3). Work is not to be carried out at height where this risk can be avoided. Where work has to be carried out at a height, it is to be undertaken from an “existing place of work”, where there is no risk of a fall occurring and no additional work equipment is needed (e.g. a roof with an existing parapet). Where an existing place of work cannot be used, work equipment is to be provided to prevent any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, work equipment is to be used to minimize the distance and consequences of any fall or, where it is not reasonably

practicable to minimize the distance, work equipment is to be used to minimize the consequences of any fall. Where none of the above can be achieved, other work equipment can be used, which has to be supplemented by other measures, e.g. instructions, supervision and training, to minimize the likelihood of a fall occurring in the first place.

4.5.3 General principles for selection of work equipment for work at height

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 7) [5] require collective protection measures to be given priority over personal protection measures. When selecting work equipment for use in work at height, the following have to be taken into account:

- a) the working conditions and the risks to the safety of persons at the place where the work equipment is to be used;
- b) in the case of work equipment for access and egress, the distance to be negotiated;
- c) the distance and consequences of a potential fall;
- d) the duration and frequency of use;
- e) the need for easy and timely evacuation and rescue in an emergency;
- f) any additional risk posed by the use, installation or removal of that work equipment or by evacuation and rescue from it.

4.5.4 Fragile surfaces

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 9) [5] require that that no person at work passes across or near (or works on, from or near) a fragile surface where it is reasonably practicable to carry out work safely, and under appropriate ergonomic conditions, without their doing so. Otherwise, platforms, coverings, guard rails or similar means of support or protection have to be provided and used, so that any foreseeable loading is supported by such supports or borne by such protection. Where the risk of a fall remains, measures have to be taken to minimize the distance and consequences of the fall.

4.5.5 Inspection of work equipment

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 12) [5] require that work equipment exposed to conditions causing deterioration which is liable to result in dangerous situations is inspected:

- a) at suitable intervals; and
- b) each time that exceptional circumstances which are liable to jeopardise the safety of the work equipment have occurred.

NOTE See [Clause 13](#) with regard to Inspection, care and maintenance of equipment.

4.6 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015

Where the CDM Regulations [3] apply, there is a requirement for a construction-phase health and safety plan and a health and safety file. These are required, where applicable, to contain information concerning the safety aspects of work at height in construction work and should be made available to those planning work at height. When construction work has been completed, there could be a need to update the health and safety file.

4.7 HSE Guidance documents

Two parts of the HSE's revised series of health and safety guidance for the construction industry, *Health and safety in construction* [19] and *Health and safety in roof work* [20], provide valuable information in a simple but comprehensive form. The guidance covers such topics as organizing the

site, the essentials of health and safety, and health and safety management and the law. Following the guidance is not a statutory requirement. However, the guidance provides sufficient information to enable the user to ensure that they comply with the law.

5 Fundamental principles

5.1 Hazard identification and risk assessment, and hierarchy of protective measures

- 5.1.1** The primary objective is to so organize, plan and manage the work that there will be an adequate margin of safety to minimize risk, with a goal of no incidents.
- 5.1.2** The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations [11] require that before fall protection systems are employed for a particular job, employers carry out a hazard identification and risk assessment (see 6.1) and set out clear requirements for all aspects of the work. In addition, the work should be carefully assessed to ensure that the method of access is appropriate to the quality of the work required.
- 5.1.3** Regarding the risk of a fall from a height, the measures that can be taken need to be considered in order (see 6.2, which gives a hierarchy of fall protection measures).

5.2 Principles of selection of personal fall protection systems and equipment

COMMENTARY ON 5.2

Attention is drawn to the appropriate legal requirements with regard to UKCA and/or CE marking when selecting personal fall protection systems and equipment.

5.2.1 Use of standards

Equipment should be selected that conforms to standards relevant to the intended use (see 7.1.3).

5.2.2 Types of fall protection systems and equipment to be considered

If, after the hazard identification and risk assessment (see 6.1), and with due consideration of the hierarchy of protective measures (see 6.2), it is decided that it is necessary to choose personal fall protection equipment, it is then necessary to choose the correct type of personal fall protection system and equipment to be used (see Clause 7).

The types of personal fall protection systems and equipment available are as follows.

- a) *Restraint (travel restriction) systems and equipment*, which restrict the user's travel so that access is not possible to zones where the risk of a fall from a height exists (see 7.2.2).
- b) *Work positioning systems and equipment*, which enable the user to be held in a partly or entirely supported position (see 7.2.3).
- c) *Rope access systems*, which employ two separately secured lines, one as the means of support and the other as a safety back-up, for access or egress to and from the workplace, both lines being attached to the user's harness (see 7.2.4).

NOTE Rope access systems can be used for work positioning.

- d) *Fall arrest systems and equipment*, which act to arrest a fall and which are used in situations where, if the user loses controlled physical contact with the working surface, there will be a free fall (see 7.2.5).

5.2.3 Limits of equipment use

It is essential that limits of equipment use are observed, as follows.

- a) Equipment designed exclusively for restraint should not be used for work positioning or as fall arrest equipment.
- b) Equipment designed exclusively for work positioning should not be used as fall arrest equipment.

It should be noted however, that some equipment is designed to be multi-purpose, e.g. for both work positioning and fall arrest, or to allow the attachment or connection of other components in order to meet the requirements for a category of work other than the one for which it was primarily designed.

5.2.4 Compatibility of equipment

When selecting equipment, it is essential for purchasers to ensure that components in any system are compatible and that the safe function of any one component is not adversely affected by, and does not interfere with, the safe function of another, or of the system. Sometimes this is not obvious, so it is important to check with the supplier or the manufacturer. Sometimes, the only way to be sure is to carry out a system performance test.

5.3 Principles of use of personal fall protection systems and equipment

5.3.1 Competency of users

It is essential that users are competent in the use of their personal fall protection systems and equipment and have a suitable attitude for working at a height.

Users should have sufficient professional or technical training, knowledge and actual experience to enable them to:

- a) carry out their assigned duties at the level of responsibility allocated to them;
- b) understand fully any potential hazards related to the work and the equipment to be used;
- c) detect any technical defects or omissions in that work and equipment, recognize any implications for health and safety from those defects or omissions, and be able to take remedial action to deal with these.

Users should also be competent to check their personal fall protection system and equipment for defects before every use.

5.3.2 Training and assessment of users

It is essential that users are suitably trained and assessed for competency in the use of their personal fall protection systems and equipment for the particular intended application (see [Clause 15](#)). They should also be trained and assessed in the pre-use checking of their equipment (see [5.3.6](#)).

NOTE [BS 8454](#) gives recommendations and guidance for training providers to enable them to ensure that training for work at height is delivered to a high standard, in a safe, controlled environment by competent and experienced staff.

5.3.3 Users, knowledge of equipment

Under the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended) [[12](#)], the manufacturer of the equipment is required to supply product information. This information should be read and thoroughly understood by the user before using the equipment. Time should be allowed for this in the planning of the work. This also applies to replacement equipment, because changes might have been made to the original specification or advice given. Knowledge of the strengths and

weaknesses of equipment can help to avoid misuse. This knowledge can be enhanced by training and by studying the information provided with the product and other technical brochures and catalogues.

5.3.4 Compatibility of equipment in use

When assembling equipment into a system, the user should check that the components in the system are compatible and that the safe function of any one component is not adversely affected by, and does not interfere with, the safe function of another, or of the system.

5.3.5 Pre-use examination of equipment new to the user

Before new or used equipment is used for the first time by a particular user, that user should ensure that it is appropriate for the intended application, that it operates correctly, and that it is in good condition. Before using a harness for the first time, it is recommended that the user is assisted in carrying out a comfort and adjustability test in a safe place, in accordance with the procedure given in [Annex B](#), to ensure that the harness is the correct size, has sufficient adjustment and is of an acceptable comfort level for the intended use, including suspension. It should be noted however, that the test described in [Annex B](#) is suitable only for belts with sub-pelvic support, sit harnesses and full body harnesses. It should not be applied to belts without sub-pelvic support or to chest harnesses.

5.3.6 Pre-use checks

All equipment should be subjected to a pre-use check before each use. Damaged equipment should be taken out of service immediately. (See [Clause 13](#) and [Annex C](#).)

5.3.7 Detailed inspections

In addition to pre-use checks, equipment should be subjected to detailed inspections by a competent person in accordance with a predetermined regime. Damaged equipment should be taken out of service immediately. (See [Clause 13](#), [Annex C](#) and HSE Guidance document *Inspecting fall arrest equipment made from webbing or rope* [21].)

5.3.8 Interim inspections

Interim inspections might be needed between detailed inspections in situations where the risk assessment has identified a hazard that could cause significant deterioration in the equipment, for example paint, chemicals or an acidic or alkaline environment. The need for and frequency of interim inspections will depend on the particular circumstances in which the equipment is to be used.

5.3.9 Anchors and anchor points

Anchors and anchor points should be of adequate strength (see [Clause 16](#)).

Wherever possible, anchors and anchor points should be above the user so that the anchor line or lanyard is taut or has as little slack as possible. Alternatively, it is permissible for the anchor or anchor point to be below the user, provided that the force on the anchor line connected to the user acts from above. An example of the latter would be on a ridged roof when the user is on the opposite side of the ridge to the anchor point and the anchor line passes over the ridge. This is to minimize the length and effect of any fall; the importance of this cannot be stressed enough. Positioning of anchors and anchor points should be such that hazards such as sharp or rough edges and hot surfaces are avoided, as they are very likely to cause damage to tensioned anchor lines and lanyards, particularly those made from textiles, which would cause them to fail on being put under load.

5.4 Principles of maintenance of personal fall protection systems and equipment

The life of the user depends on his or her personal fall protection systems and equipment being maintained properly. Equipment should be kept clean and dry and should be properly stored. Wet

equipment should be thoroughly dried before storage. Equipment should not be altered or repaired, unless this has been authorized by the manufacturer (see [Clause 13](#)).

6 Hazard identification, risk assessment and safety method statement

6.1 General

- 6.1.1** Hazard identification and risk assessment which have to be carried out before the work commences, as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations [11], has to include consideration of whether or not the proposed method of work would be appropriate in view of the hierarchy of protective measures laid down in the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) [5] (see [6.2](#)). A safe system of work then needs to be planned including selection of appropriate working methods and equipment, together with competent personnel, and it is recommended that a safety method statement should be prepared (see [6.1.8](#)).
- 6.1.2** A safety method statement, although not required by law, has proved to be an effective way of producing an action plan for a safe system of work. It is particularly useful in bringing together the assessments of the various hazards which might arise in a particular job. Safety method statements may also be linked to, or form part of, a company's safety policy and procedures, particularly where these do not cover the particular circumstances of the work concerned.
- 6.1.3** Hazard identification should comprise identification of anything that could cause harm, for example, electrical installations, sharp edges or working from a ladder.
- 6.1.4** A risk assessment should comprise a careful evaluation of all hazards identified, to determine the level of risk posed by each. Action should be taken to eliminate the hazards. If this is not possible, precautions should be taken to minimize the probability of persons being harmed.
- 6.1.5** Taking the examples given in [6.1.3](#) the levels of risk and the precautions that should be taken are as follows.
- a) Electrical installations pose a high risk of electric shock. The probability of harm should be minimized by ensuring that all potentially "live" components are insulated and metal casings are earthed.
 - b) Sharp edges pose a high risk of laceration injuries and also a high risk of indirectly causing injury through damage to equipment such as lanyards. The probability of harm should be minimized by ensuring that all sharp edges are protected.
 - c) Working from a ladder poses a high risk of a fall from a height. The probability of harm should be minimized by ensuring that the ladder is correctly positioned and secured, and its use limited if necessary.
- 6.1.6** It is only after such hazard identification and risk assessment has been carried out that the appropriate fall protection equipment and systems can be selected. The hazard identification and risk assessment should be site specific and should be reviewed on a continuous basis, for example, each day or at each change of job.
- 6.1.7** In the risk assessment, detailed consideration should be given to all possible emergency scenarios and to planning how any necessary rescues would be carried out (see [Clause 11](#)).
- 6.1.8** A record should be kept of each hazard identified, the assessment of the risk and the action taken to minimize it. For companies with five or more employees this is a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations [11], but makes good sense for companies

of all sizes, as records can provide valuable information and documentary evidence in case of any incident. Taking the examples given in [6.1.3](#) and [6.1.5](#), the records would need to state the following:

- a) electrical installations: insulation and earthing checked and found to be sound;
- b) sharp edges: edge protection in place;
- c) ladders: secured at top and bottom; angle of lean adjusted; use restricted to access only.

6.1.9 It should be ensured that the following actions have been taken and reported in the records:

- a) a proper hazard identification and risk assessment has been made;
- b) a check has been made of who and how many people could be affected by each hazard;
- c) all the obvious and significant hazards have been taken into account;
- d) reasonable precautions have been taken to minimize the risks;
- e) the residual risks have been determined and found to be low.

6.1.10 When planning a safe system of work, an employer should consider the following, as early in the planning of the work as possible:

- a) The workplace, in particular:
 - 1) the nature of the workplace including its form, structure, geometry and materials;
 - 2) the nature of the environment in the workplace including any adverse climatic or atmospheric conditions.
- b) The work, in particular:
 - 1) details of the tasks to be carried out including any special risks associated with them;
 - 2) how much space is needed;
 - 3) how long the work is expected to take.
- c) The workers, in particular:
 - 1) their body size;
 - 2) the range of movements they will need to make and the postures they will need to adopt.
- d) The personal fall protection equipment, in particular:
 - 1) who it is for [see item c)];
 - 2) features and limitations of the equipment, including the materials from which it is made and its means of operation.

6.1.11 The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 [\[12\]](#) require every employer to ensure that:

- a) suitable personal protective equipment is provided;
- b) the items of personal protective equipment are compatible;
- c) an assessment is made to determine whether the personal protective equipment he intends to provide is suitable;
- d) the personal protective equipment is maintained in an efficient state.

6.1.12 As part of the selection of personal fall protection equipment it is recommended that:

- a) field trials be undertaken, with input from those individuals who will use the equipment;

- b) technical information be carefully evaluated; in particular a careful comparison should be made of the methods used for testing the equipment and the planned mode of use.

6.2 Hierarchy of protective measures for people working at a height

The working environment should be as hazard-free as possible, thereby minimizing the risks to workers (see 6.1). This applies particularly to work at height. Each hazard needs to be dealt with in a manner that ideally eliminates the risk, or, if that is not practicable, reduces that risk as far as possible and at least

to the highest acceptable level. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) (Regulation 6) [12] require a hierarchical approach to the planning of work at height, with collective protective measures to be given priority over personal protective measures, and measures that prevent a fall to be given priority over those that minimize the height and consequences of a fall. This is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 — Illustration of hierarchy of protective measures given in the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

Priority		Highest	Lowest
	Category of work equipment	Examples of protective measures	
		Collective	Personal
Highest	Work equipment which prevents a fall	Working platforms with barriers Advanced guardrail systems Barriers Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)	Personal fall prevention systems (e.g. valley frames) Personal fall protection equipment (work restraint systems)
	Work equipment which minimizes the distance and consequences of a fall	Safety nets at high level (rigged close to the work) Soft landing systems installed close to the work	Other personal fall protection equipment (rope access, work positioning and fall arrest systems) (See Note 2.)
	Work equipment which minimizes the consequences of a fall	Soft landing systems Safety nets rigged at low level (≤ 6 m below the work)	Inflatable injury prevention systems, e.g. air jackets Other personal protective equipment not normally associated with fall protection, e.g. lifejackets for work over water
Lowest	Work equipment which does neither (ladders, step ladders, hop-ups, trestles, etc.)	Instruction, supervision and training of users to minimize the risk of them suffering a fall	

NOTE 1 Within each category:

- a) collective protective measures take priority over personal protective measures;
- b) appropriate work equipment (and its order of priority) needs to be determined by taking into account the work to be undertaken and by considering the risk to those installing, using and removing the equipment and the implications for rescue associated with the work equipment being used.

NOTE 2 The fall factor (see 9.1.3.1) has to be kept as low as possible, with systems with a fall factor of zero being given priority.

7 Selection of personal fall protection systems and equipment

7.1 General

7.1.1 Risk assessment

Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 [11] requires that before equipment is selected or used a risk assessment is carried out for each job for which that equipment is to be used.

7.1.2 UKCA marking

COMMENTARY ON 7.1.2

The UKCA mark replaces CE marking. It is essential not to use UKCA marking as the sole criterion for purchasing equipment. It is often thought that marking means that the equipment will be suitable for the particular task for which it is being purchased. This is not necessarily the case, as the testing specified in the relevant European standard is often limited to checking the most important parameters under laboratory conditions and therefore might not cover the specific circumstances of use. Therefore, ensuring that the equipment has a UKCA mark is only one of the factors involved in the selection process. UKCA marking is mandatory on many different types of product, not just personal protective equipment (PPE). For PPE, there are three different risk categories, ranging from simple items like protective work gloves (risk category I) to risk category III equipment for protection against mortal danger (e.g. harnesses). Most equipment for fall protection is risk category III.

For PPE risk category III, UKCA marking indicates that the product has been independently type tested and meets the essential health and safety requirements of the Regulation (as amended). This is certified by an organization, approved by the government, known as an approved body. An approved body also monitors the quality of production, either by random but regular inspections of the manufacturer's quality system (e.g. to BS EN ISO 9001) or by carrying out batch tests. The usual way for manufacturers to ensure that their products meet the essential health and safety requirements is to have their products tested to a designated standard, although this is not the only way. The alternative is for equipment to be UKCA marked to the Regulations (as amended) via the technical file route. Risk category III PPE (see 7.1.2.2) will always have a four-digit numerical code attached to the UKCA mark to identify the relevant approved body.

The UKCA mark is not meant to be taken as a mark of quality, although PPE risk category III is subject to such rigorous controls that this point could be argued otherwise.

Where equipment used for fall protection is classified as personal protective equipment (PPE), UKCA marking should not be used as the sole criterion for purchasing; the marking should be for goods appropriate to the intended use.

NOTE 1 Attention is drawn to legal requirements with regard to UKCA and/or CE marking on Type C personal fall protection equipment.

NOTE 2 Attention is drawn to Regulation (EU) 2016/425 - as amended by the Product Safety and Metrology etc. (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 [22], SI 2019/696, Part 5, Regulation 38, and the Personal Protective Equipment (Enforcement) Regulations 1998 [23] – is hereinafter refer to as “the Regulation (as amended)”.

7.1.3 Standards

Equipment should be selected that conforms to standards relevant to the intended use. Whenever possible these should be appropriate BS standards. In the absence of these, equipment conforming to other standards, e.g. international (ISO), national or trade association standards, may be chosen. If there is doubt about whether or not a particular standard is relevant to the intended use, it is

advisable to discuss it with the manufacturer of the equipment. The alternative is to select equipment that has been UKCA marked to the Regulations (as amended) via the technical file route.

Many standards specify marking of the standard number on the equipment, and this can be valuable to purchasers and users for checking that the equipment is appropriate for the intended use. However, it should be noted that not all standards require marking of the standard number on the equipment; also there might not be a standard for a particular item of equipment. It is also important to note that marking of a standard number on an item of equipment represents a manufacturer's claim of conformity to the standard, it should not be confused with third party certification of conformity.

7.2 Types of personal fall protection systems and equipment

7.2.1 General

If, after the hazard identification and risk assessment, and after consideration of the hierarchy of protective measures (see [6.1](#) and [6.2](#)), it is decided that personal fall protection equipment is needed, it is then necessary to choose the type of personal fall protection system and equipment to be used. This may be either a system that prevents a fall or one that arrests a fall. Wherever possible, a personal fall protection system that prevents a fall should be used in preference to a fall arrest system.

If a personal fall protection system that prevents a fall is to be used it should be one designed to prevent the user reaching zones where the risk of a fall exists, or one that prevents the onset of a fall. Where it is not practicable to use a system that prevents a fall, then, as a last resort, a fall arrest system should be used.

7.2.2 Restraint (travel restriction) systems

If the objective is to restrict the user's travel so that access is not possible to reach zones where the risk of a fall from a height exists, a restraint system should be used. This may be appropriate fall arrest equipment, work positioning equipment or a simple belt coupled with a lanyard of limited length. The restraint system should be chosen and arranged so that it is not possible for the user to access zones where the risk of a fall exists. Details of restraint systems are given in [Clause 8](#).

Sometimes users choose to use their restraint system for support, e.g. on a sloping roof where it is possible to move around without support, but where the use of a support would aid carrying out the work. Users should be aware of the consequences of a slip or equipment failure when using this technique. They should consider in their risk assessment the appropriateness of their equipment and whether a safety back-up system should be employed.

7.2.3 Work positioning systems

If the planned method of work is for the user to be in a partly or entirely supported position, then a work positioning system should be used. The work positioning system should include a safety back-up system, in addition to the primary support, so that should there be an operator error or failure of the primary support, a fall will be prevented or arrested. A rope access system can be used for work positioning. Details of work positioning systems are given in [Clause 10](#) and details of rope access systems are given in [BS 7985](#), BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2.

In addition to its primary function of providing support and preventing a fall, work positioning equipment is likely to be strong enough to arrest a free fall of limited distance and force, but might not conform to the other essential requirements for a fall arrest system, unless combined with appropriate additional components, e.g. an energy absorber.

7.2.4 Rope access systems

If the planned method of work is to use two separately secured lines, one as the means of support and the other as a safety back-up, for access or egress to and from the workplace, and if both lines are to be attached to the user's harness, a rope access system should be used in accordance with [BS 7985](#), BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2.

NOTE 1 Details of work positioning systems are given in [Clause 10](#) and details of rope access systems are given in [BS 7985](#), BS ISO 22846-1 and BS ISO 22846-2.

NOTE 2 If the system is based on a line which moves with the user e.g. a bosun's chair, this is not a rope access system but a work positioning system.

7.2.5 Fall arrest systems

If the planned method of work is such that if the user loses controlled physical contact with the working surface there will be a free fall, a fall arrest system conforming to BS EN 363 should be used. This comprises a full body harness conforming to BS EN 361, a suitable anchor, and a system or device that has energy absorbing capacity and that provides a means of attachment to that anchor. Details of fall arrest systems are given in [Clause 9](#).

8 Restraint systems

8.1 General

8.1.1 Restraint systems are used to prevent users from reaching zones where the risk of a fall exists. They involve the connection of the user to the structure by means of a lanyard or an anchor line, the position and length of which is such that, irrespective of the user's movements in a broadly horizontal plane, they can never get into a situation from which a fall can occur. Fundamentally, restraint systems prevent the initiation of a fall (see [Figure 1](#)).

8.1.2 Restraint systems have a number of constraints. These are as follows:

- a) they are limited to movement in the broadly horizontal plane;
- b) they restrict the user's mobility, i.e. they might allow movement to certain parts of a structure, but not to others;
- c) they are site-specific, i.e. the length of the restraining lanyard or anchor line might only be appropriate to one situation.

8.1.3 There are some notable differences between restraint systems and other personal fall protection systems. These include the following.

- a) The only fall that can occur using a restraint system is a "fall on the level", i.e. a trip or slip resulting in the user falling onto the surface on which they were standing.
- b) The force experienced by a user connected to a restraint system and the force at the anchor are likely never to exceed the equivalent of twice the mass of the user.
- c) No rescue provisions are normally needed with a restraint system.

NOTE Rescue provisions might be necessary, depending on the location of the work, to deal with a situation in which the user of a restraint system becomes incapacitated, for example if they are working at a difficult to reach location on a rooftop.

8.2 Selection of the components of a restraint system

8.2.1 General

A restraint system should comprise the following components:

- a) a body-holding device, comprising a waist belt (preferably incorporating a sub-pelvic support), a sit harness or a full body harness (see [11.6](#));
- b) a fixed anchor point e.g. an eyebolt, or a mobile anchor point, running along a horizontal rigid or flexible anchor line (see [Clause 15](#));
- c) a lanyard or anchor line, connected between the body holding device and the anchor point (see [7.2.2](#) and [11.7](#));
- d) connectors, for joining the lanyard or anchor line to the anchor point and to the body-holding device (see [11.5](#)).

8.2.2 Lanyards and anchor lines for restraint systems

The range of the user's broadly horizontal movement should be restricted by the length of the lanyard or anchor line and by the position of the anchor point (see [Figure 1](#)) to ensure that the user is physically prevented from entering an area where there is a risk of a fall from a height. The length of the lanyard or anchor line should be such that when connected to the intended anchor point it is long enough to allow the user to reach the intended work area but short enough to prevent fall arrest conditions being created [see [Figure 2b](#)]. If it is too short the work area might not be within reach [see [Figure 2a](#)]. If it is too long it might create free fall and fall arrest conditions, which, if realised, could severely injure the user or cause system failure [see [Figure 2c](#) and [2d](#)]. The limit of movement should be determined by tracing the locus of the point at which the lanyard or anchor line connects to the body-holding device, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

To extend the range of horizontal movement, so increasing the areas accessible to the user, and permit two or more users to be connected simultaneously, a restraint system employing a horizontal anchor line may be used (see [Figure 3](#)). The anchor line may be rigid, e.g. a rail, or flexible, e.g. a wire rope. Horizontal anchor lines for fall arrest applications are suitable for this purpose (see [9.5](#)). Each user should be connected to the anchor line by a separate connector. Account should be taken for any deflection in the anchor line. Account should be taken for any deflection in the anchor line.

A lanyard or anchor line for restraint should not be used for fall arrest purposes.

An energy absorbing lanyard of the correct length may be used for restraint provided that the situation in which it is to be used is such that it will not be subjected to a force that could cause the energy absorber to begin to deploy (i.e. a force in excess of 2 kN).

8.3 Use of restraint systems

A restraint system should not be used in a situation in which it might unexpectedly be relied upon to perform a fall arrest function, for example where there is a risk of a fall over an edge [see [Figure 4b](#)] or where there is a risk of a fall through a surface made of fragile material (see [Figure 5](#)), as this could lead to serious injury to the user. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended) [5] specifically require steps to be taken to prevent any person from falling through any fragile material. In such situations other methods of fall protection should be utilized, e.g. platforms and crawling boards.

NOTE 1 [Figure 5](#) shows a restraint system preventing a fall over an edge [see [Figure 5a](#)] but putting the user at risk of a fall through a roof light [see [Figure 5b](#)].

NOTE 2 A test to determine the fragility of roofing assemblies is given in ACR(M)001 Test for non fragility of profile sheeted roofing assemblies published by the Advisory Committee for Roof safety [24].

If during the work it becomes apparent that the restraint system would not prevent a fall over an edge, e.g. the connecting lanyard is too long, work should be stopped immediately and action taken to remedy the situation, for example by adjusting or replacing the connecting lanyard or by utilizing a different method of fall protection.

Account should be taken of any elongation of a lanyard or anchor line that could allow, for example, a fall over an edge.

On a flat or shallow pitch roof a lanyard or anchor line should not be used in a position, for example near a gable, in which it might be relied upon to perform a fall arrest function, [see [Figure 6 a](#)]], or might allow the user to fall to the ground [see [Figure 6 b](#)]]. In such a situation an alternative method of fall protection should be used.

NOTE 3 In [Figure 6a](#), Positions A, B and C are appropriate applications of restraint systems, as the user is prevented from reaching the gutter. Position D, unless a “stop” is fitted to the horizontal anchor line, would allow a fall at the gable.

NOTE 4 In [Figure 6b](#), the length of the lanyard would allow a fall to the ground.

On a roof with a horizontal anchor line along its ridge, safe access to the gable can be arranged by using additional fixed single-point anchors. This requires the user to carry and use an additional fixed length lanyard, which should be connected to the additional anchor before the user disconnects the first lanyard from the horizontal anchor line. Thorough user training (see [Clause 15](#)) and a detailed safety method statement (see [Clause 6](#)) are essential if such a system is to be used. Advice on other ways of extending the accessible area is given in [BS 7883:2019](#).

Some restraint systems incorporate a manually adjustable lanyard or anchor line fitted with a locking mechanism by which the user can vary the limit of travel; extreme care should be taken when using such a system to ensure that the user does not adjust the lanyard or anchor line such that they could reach a position from which a fall from a height could occur.

Where a horizontal anchor line is used, it should be positioned such that any deflection generated by the user(s), e.g. by pulling on it, does not allow a fall from a height to take place (see [16.4.1](#) and [Figure 50](#)).

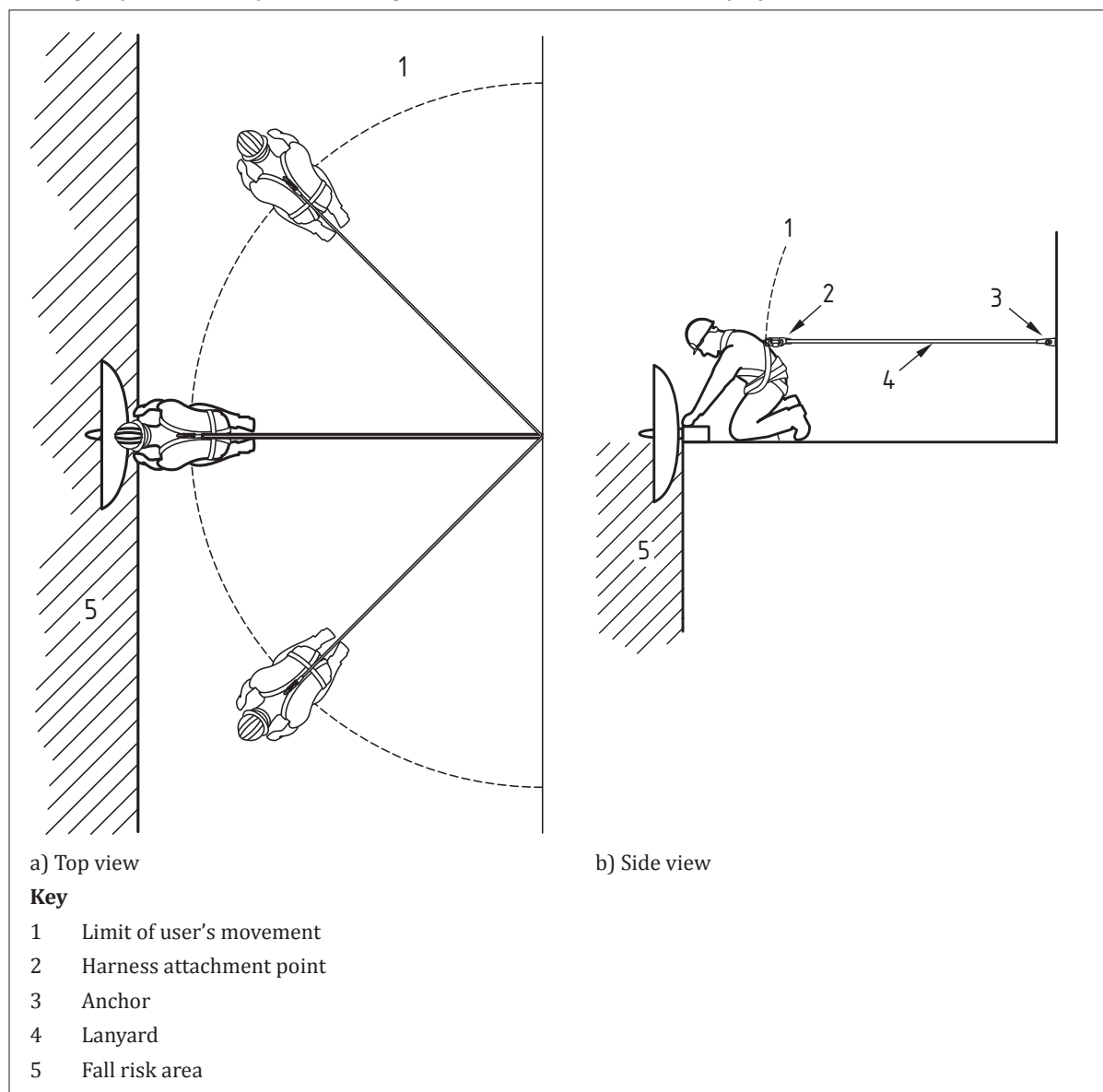
Figure 1 — Example of a restraint system limiting access to zones where the risk of a fall exists

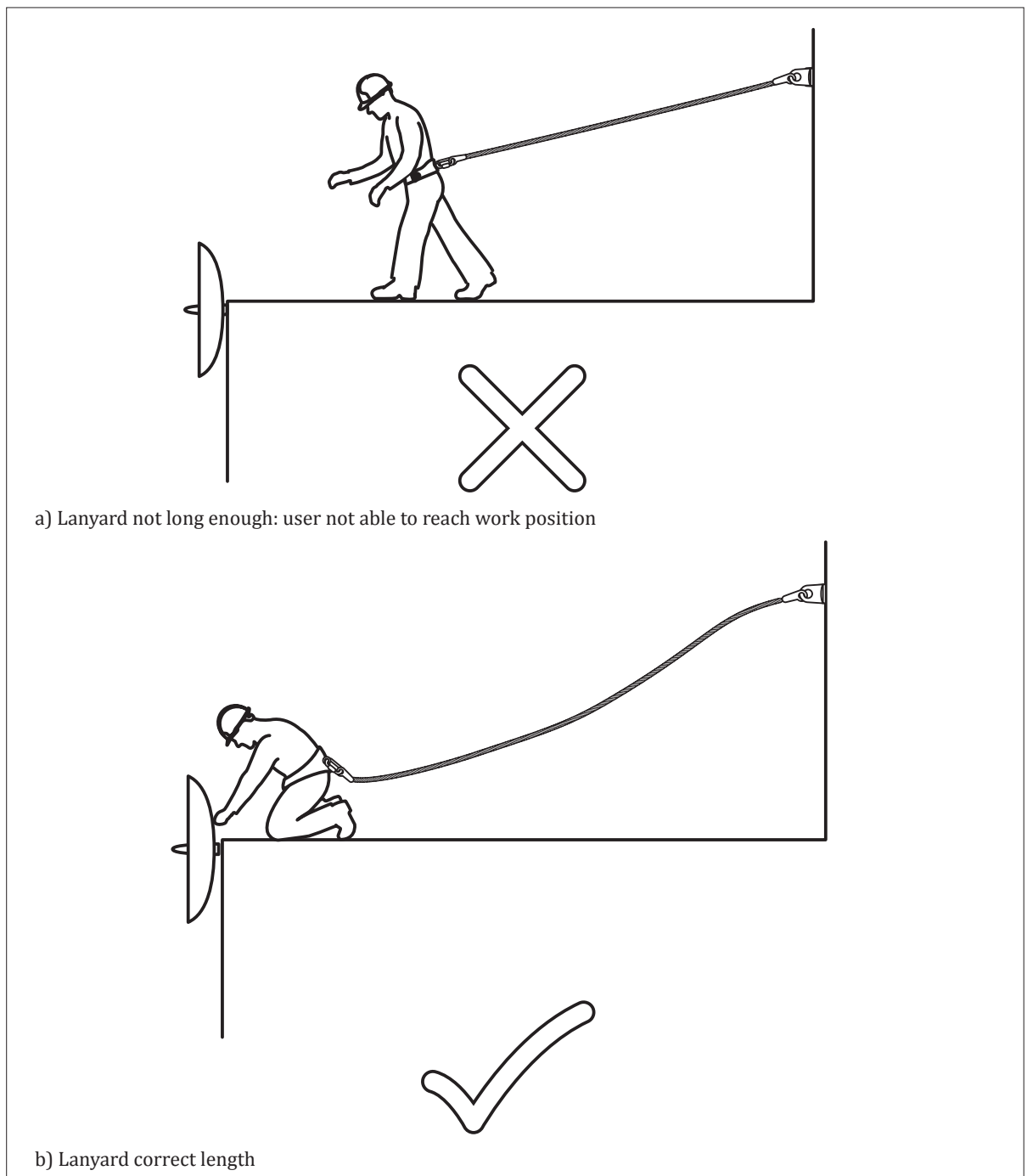
Figure 2 — Importance of correct lanyard length in a restraint system

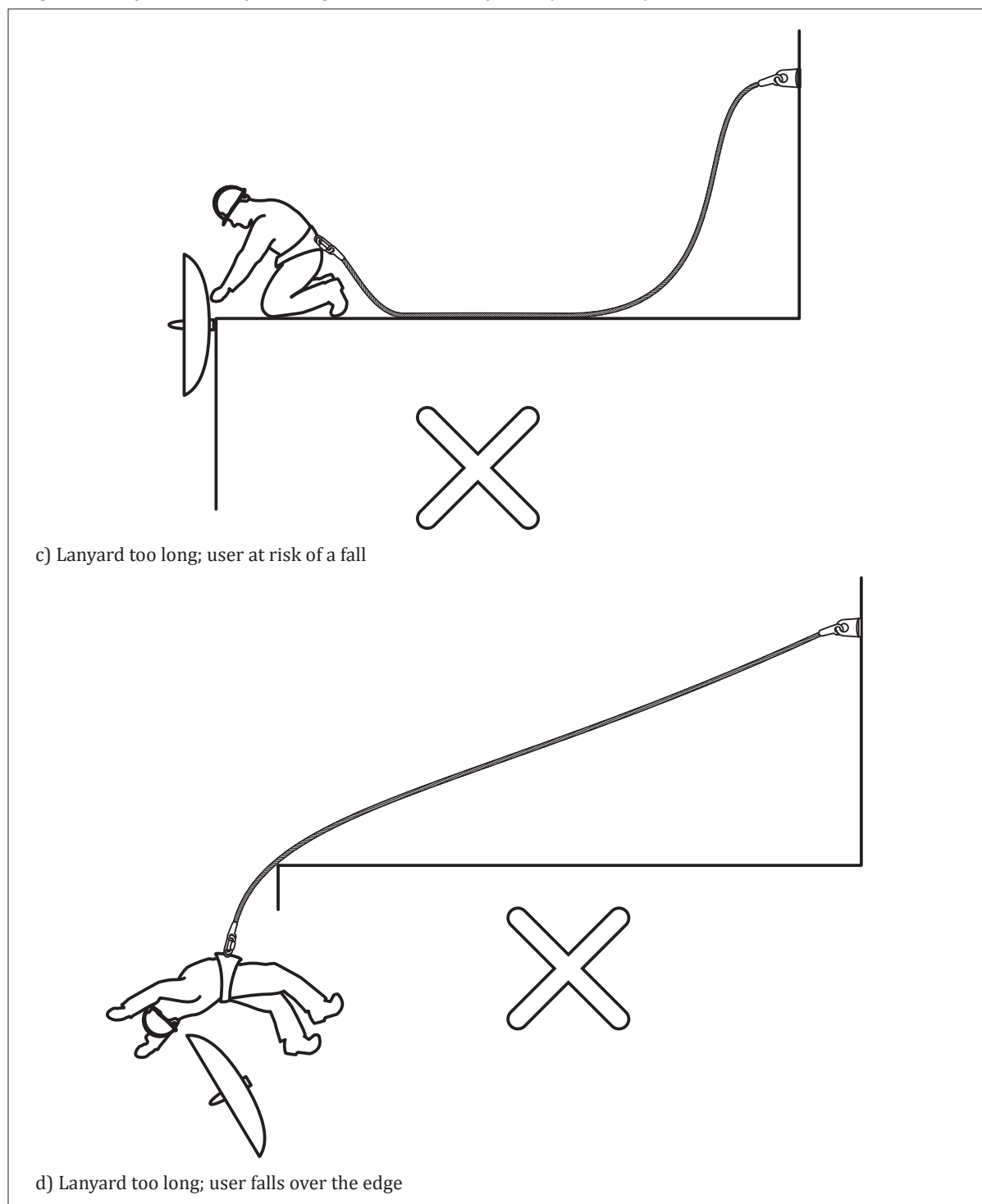
Figure 2 — Importance of correct lanyard length in a restraint system (continued)

Figure 3 — Example of a restraint system using a rigid horizontal anchor line

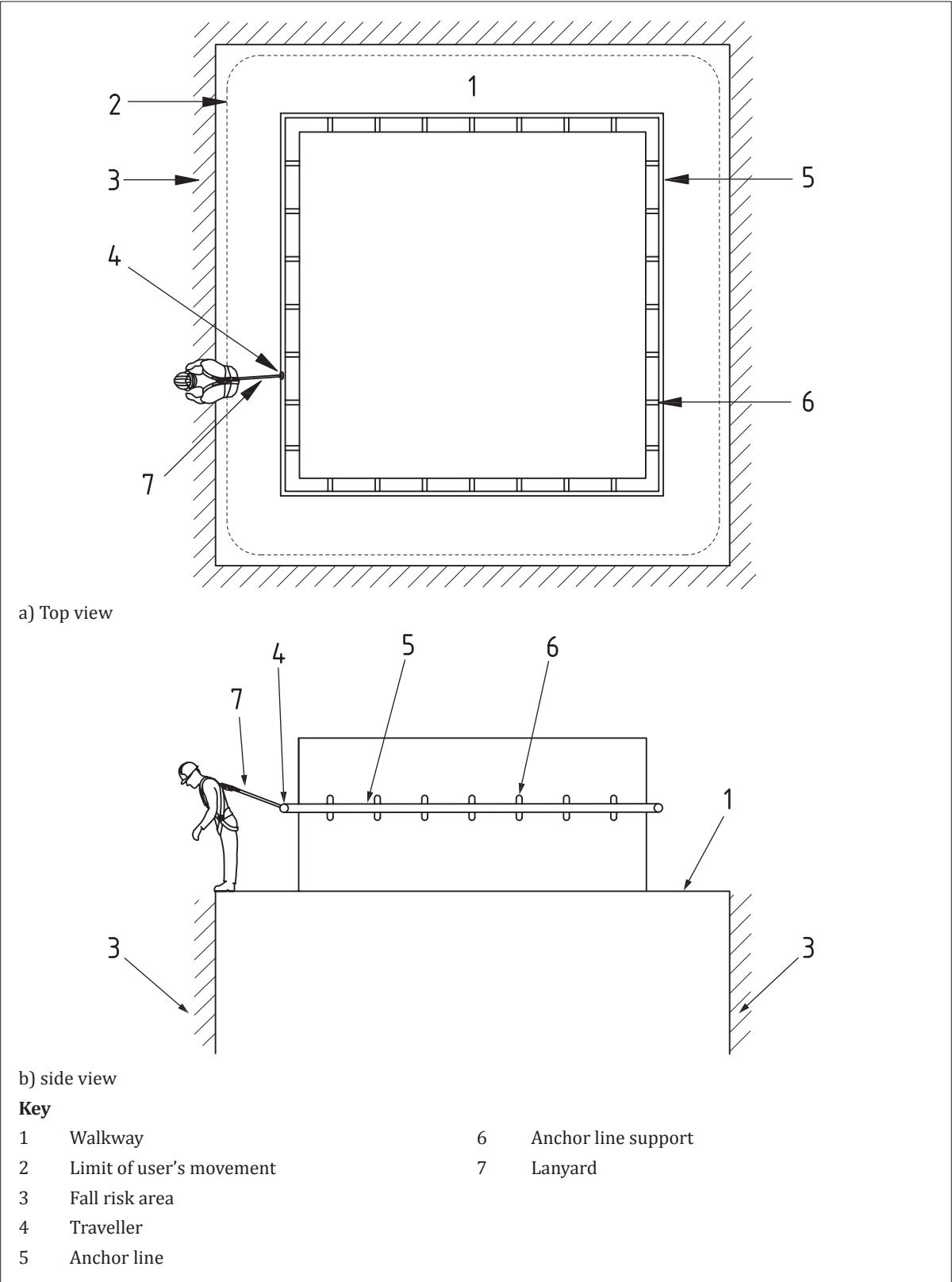


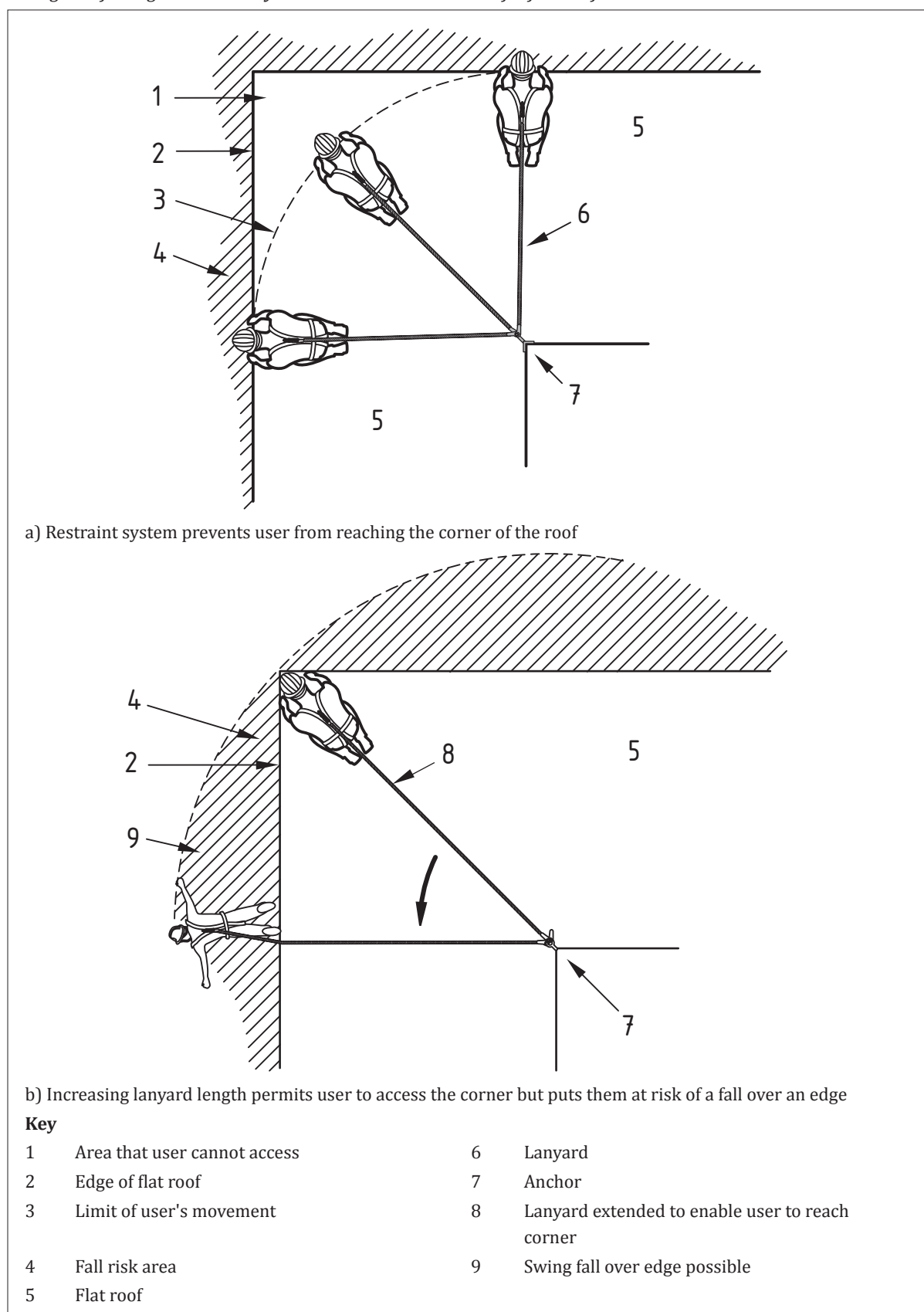
Figure 4 — Dangers of using a restraint system to access the corner of a flat roof

Figure 5 — Situation in which a restraint system should not be used because there is a risk of a fall through a fragile material

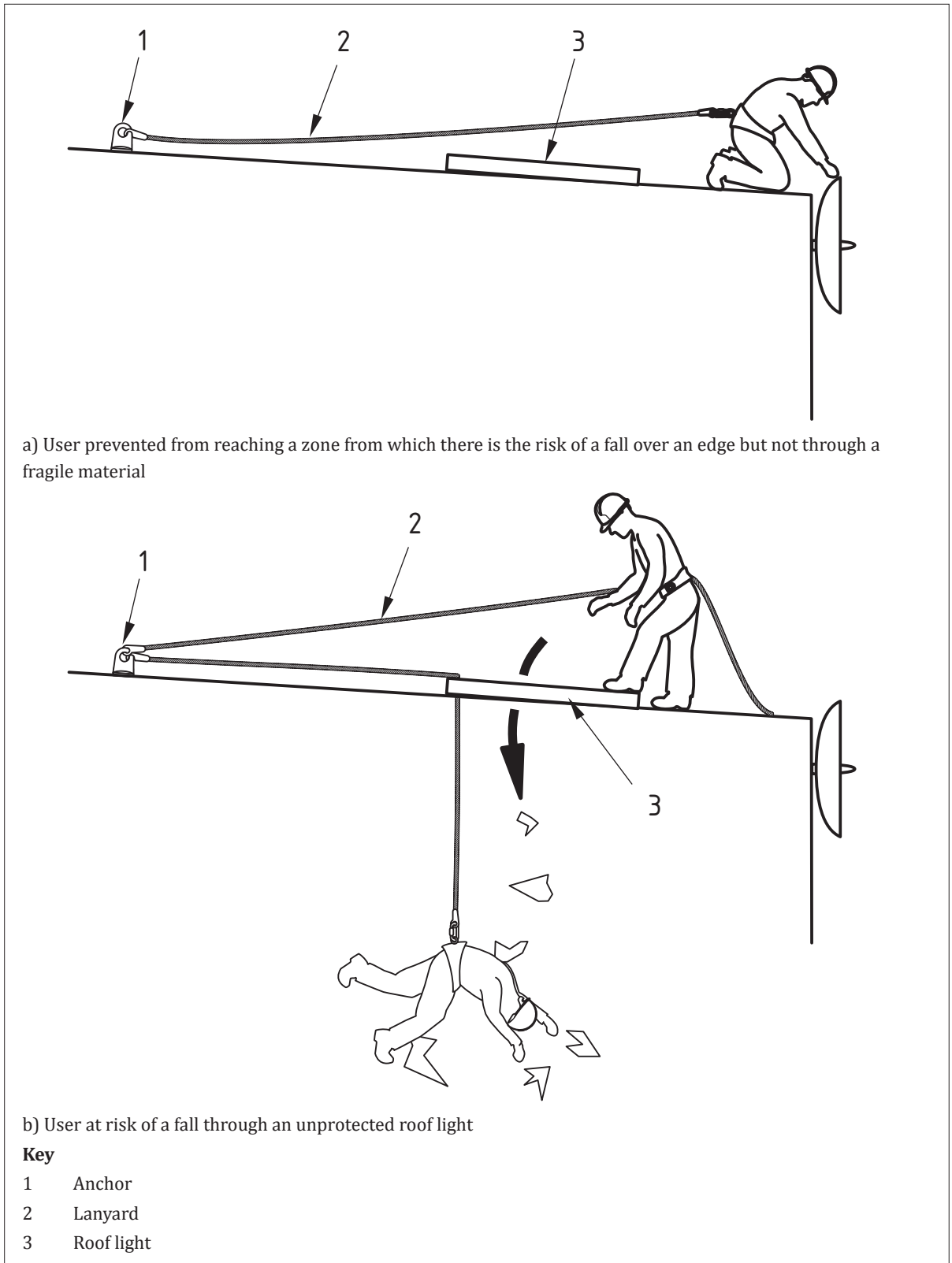
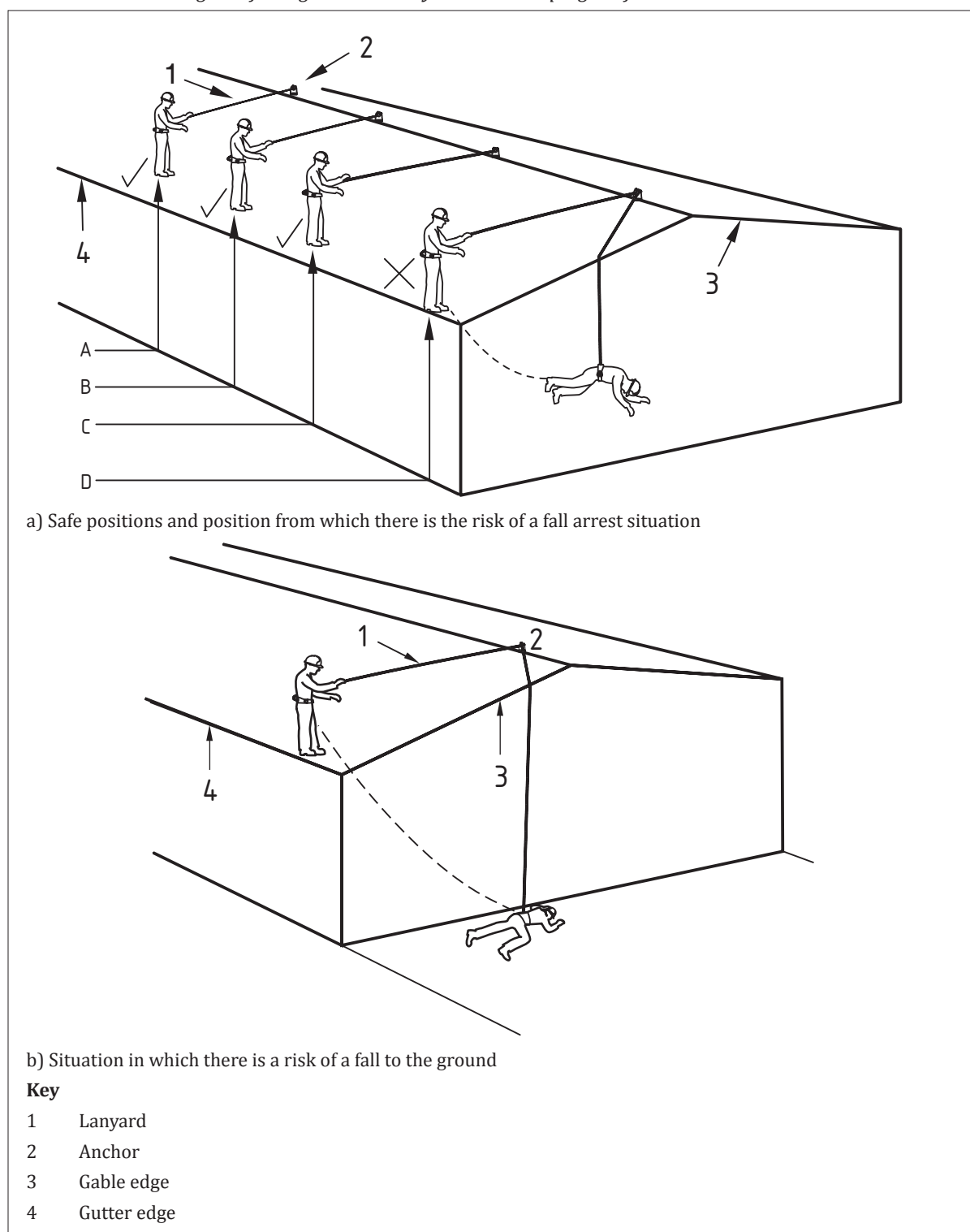


Figure 6 — Limitations and dangers of using a restraint system on a sloping roof

9 Fall arrest systems

9.1 General

9.1.1 Basic characteristics of a fall arrest system

A fall arrest system physically links the user to the workplace structure by a series of interconnected components which arrests the free fall of the user, should a fall take place, by applying an arresting force and decelerating the user through a short arrest distance.

When a fall arrest system is used, there are four phases to a fall as follows:

- a) initiation, i.e. the cause;
- b) the fall itself;
- c) fall arrest, i.e. termination of the fall;
- d) suspension, after the fall.

Injury can occur in the following phases:

- 1) during the fall itself, e.g. by impact with the structure;
- 2) during fall arrest, e.g. by the violence of the impact as the fall is arrested;
- 3) during the suspension phase, e.g. through suspension intolerance (see [Clause 11](#) and [Annex D](#)).

It is essential to use a fall arrest system that is suitable for the particular work situation in order to minimize the risk of such injuries should a fall occur.

There are four main types of fall arrest systems, as follows (see [Figure 7](#)):

- i) systems based on one or more energy absorbing lanyards (see [9.2](#));
- ii) systems based on a retractable type fall arrester (see [9.3](#));
- iii) systems based on vertical anchor line and a guided type fall arrester, which includes systems with a rigid anchor line and systems with a flexible anchor line (see [9.4](#));
- iv) systems based on a horizontal anchor line with one or more travellers (see [9.5](#)).

NOTE 1 BS EN 363 includes detailed examples of the first three types.

A safety helmet with a y-shaped chin strap designed to withstand front, back and side impact should be used (see [13.5](#)).

NOTE 2 The outcome for an unconscious person in suspension can be serious (see [Annex D](#)).

Figure 7 — Examples of different types of fall arrest system

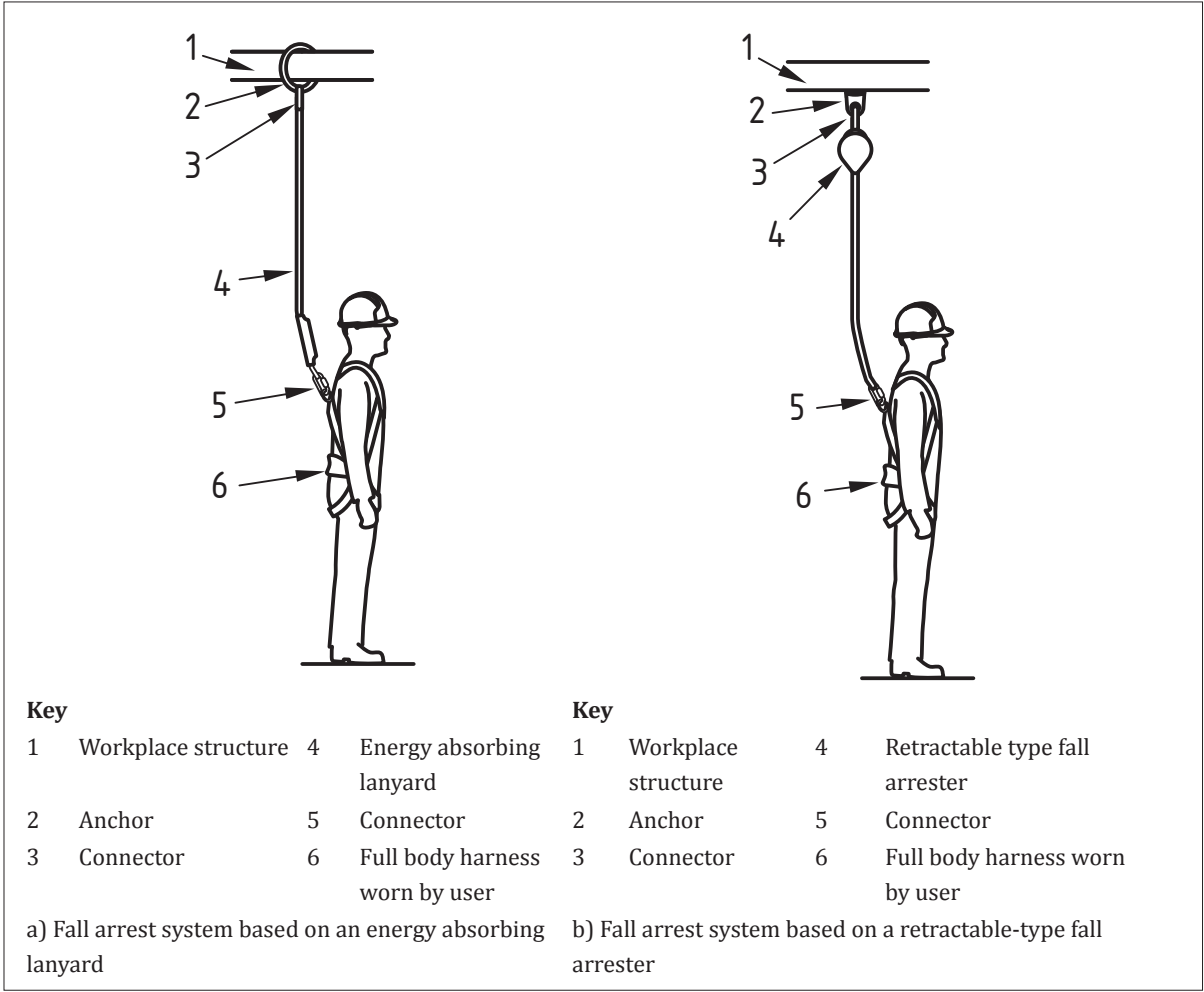


Figure 7 — Examples of different types of fall arrest system (continued)

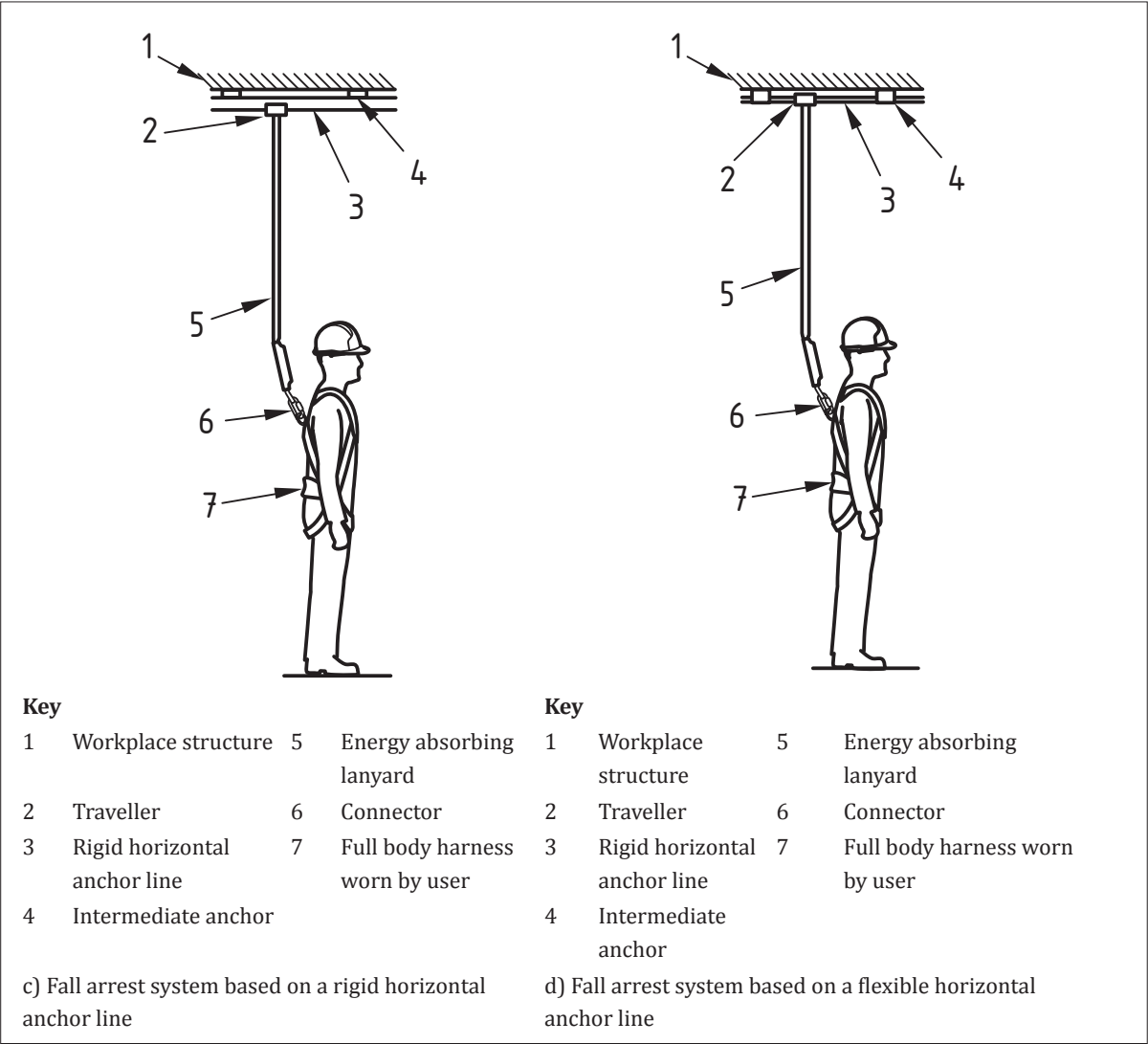


Figure 7 — Examples of different types of fall arrest system (continued)

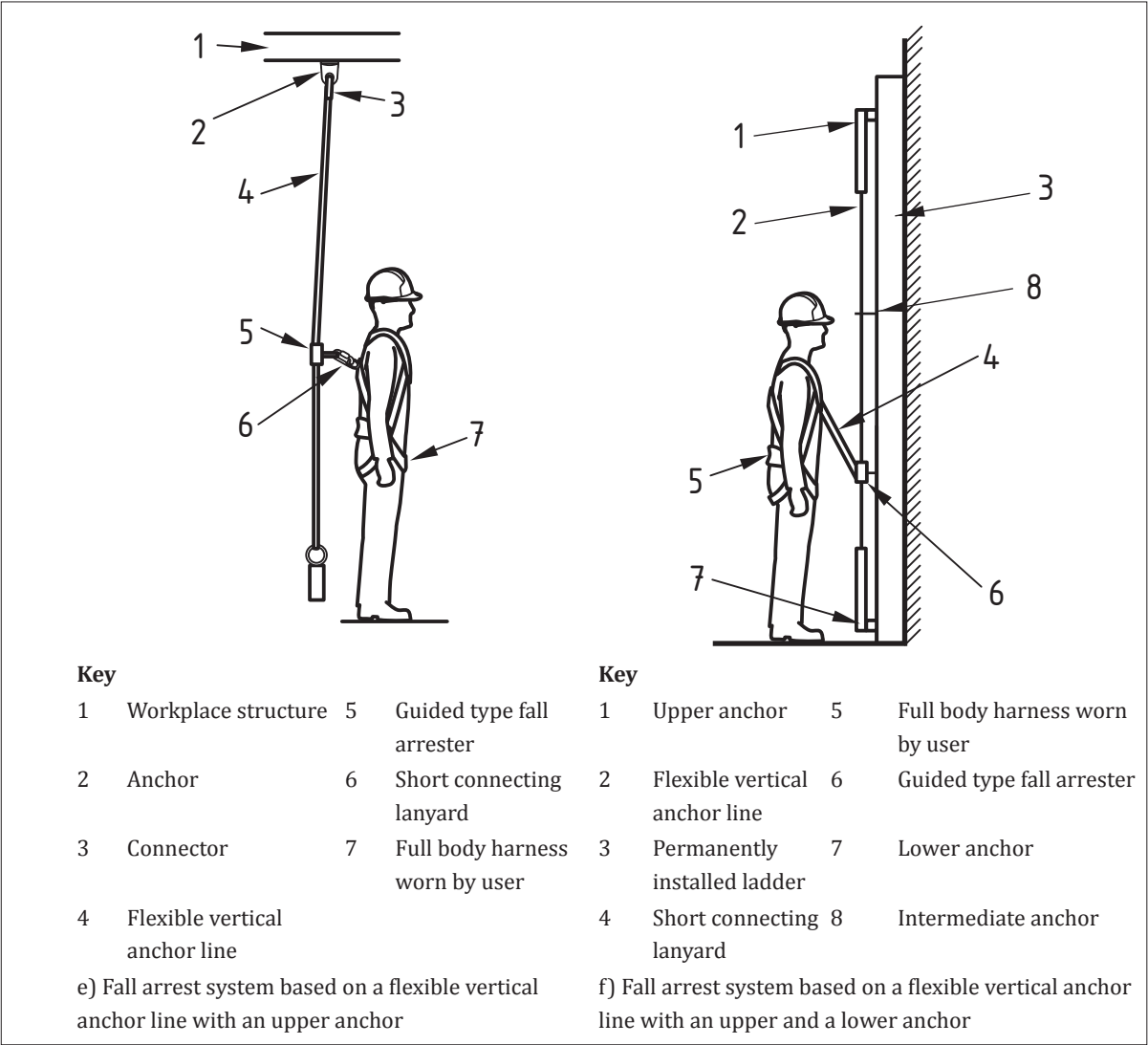
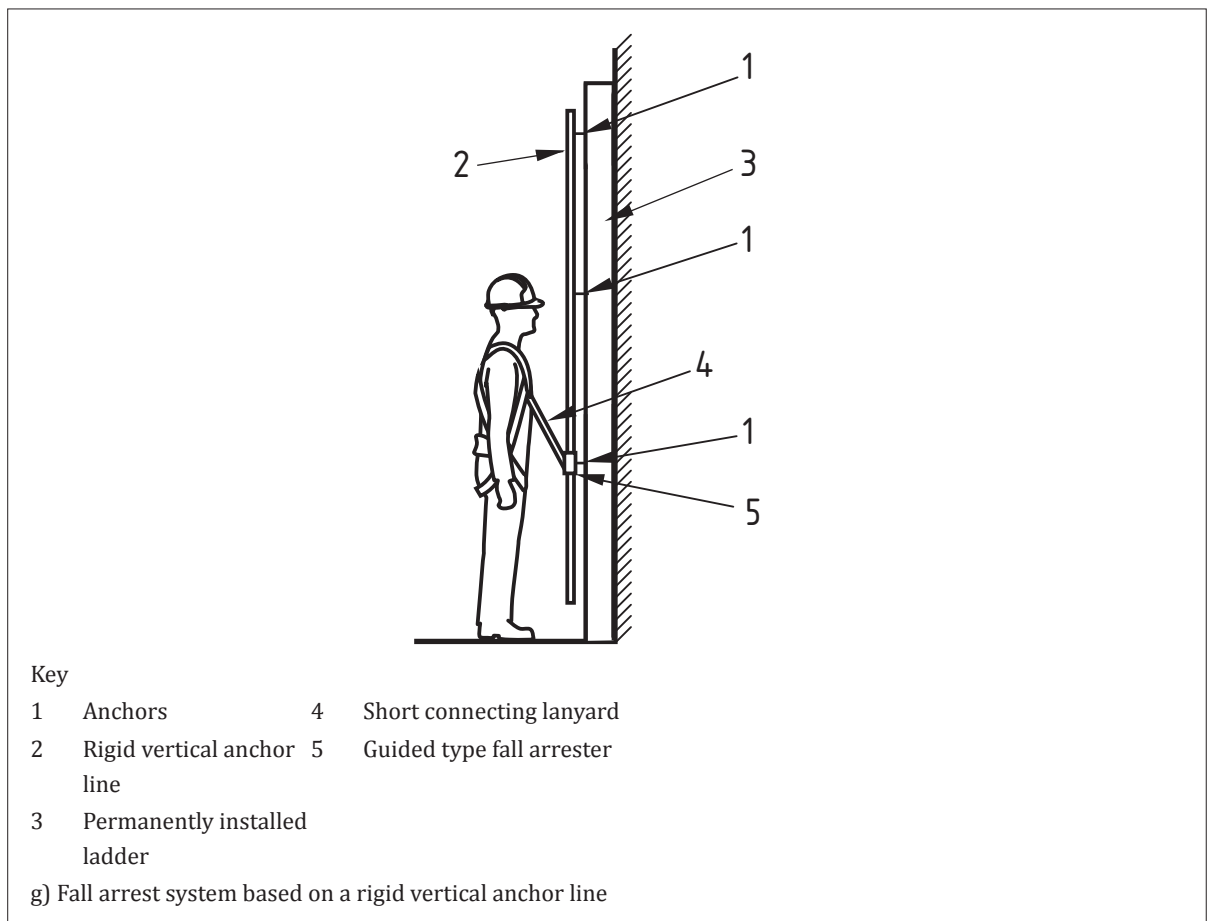


Figure 7 — Examples of different types of fall arrest system (continued)

9.1.2 Full body harnesses for fall arrest systems

9.1.2.1 General

A full body harness should always be used in a fall arrest system. Under no circumstances should a waist belt or a chest harness be used on its own for fall arrest purposes. A full body harness conforming to BS EN 361 should be used. (See also [12.6.1](#).)

9.1.2.2 Use of full body harness attachment points

Full body harnesses are equipped with one or more designated fall arrest attachment points for connecting the full body harness to the energy absorbing lanyard or retractable type fall arrester. It is essential that only the attachment points designated by the manufacturer for fall arrest purposes are used. Some full body harnesses are also fitted with side waist attachment points for work positioning. These side waist attachment points should not under any circumstances be used as attachment points for fall arrest purposes.

The designated fall arrest attachment points are as follows:

- a rear (dorsal) attachment point, which is arranged to lie centrally between the shoulder blades when the full body harness is worn;
- a front (sternal) attachment point, which is arranged to lie centrally at the bottom of the breastbone when the full body harness is worn.

The advantages and disadvantages of using each of these two attachment points are given in [Annex E](#).

In the case of a full body harness for use with a retractable type fall arrester, where a rear attachment point on the harness is used, a short extension lanyard should be used (see Note). Where this is

integral with the harness, the manufacturer can be expected to have tested the strength of this configuration. In the case of a harness without an integral extension lanyard a short detachable lanyard conforming to BS EN 354 should be used (see [Figure 8](#)).

NOTE It is difficult to reach behind the back to attach the swivel hook of the retractable type fall arrester to the rear attachment point on the full body harness. By attaching a short extension lanyard to this point before donning the harness, the free end of the lanyard becomes an extended attachment point, to which it is relatively easy to connect.

9.1.2.3 Donning a full body harness

A full body harness should be donned and correctly adjusted in accordance with manufacturers' instructions. It is important to check that the connections at the anchor point and at the attachment point on the full body harness have been made correctly. This involves checking that the gate mechanism of the connector is fully closed and locked and the connector is aligned properly within the anchor and attachment point. The purpose of these precautions is to avoid inadvertent disengagement of the connector during work (referred to as "roll-out"). For more details on connectors see [12.5](#).

9.1.3 Lanyards for fall arrest systems

9.1.3.1 General

WARNING. A lanyard is never to be used on its own for fall arrest purposes without any means of energy absorption in the fall arrest system.

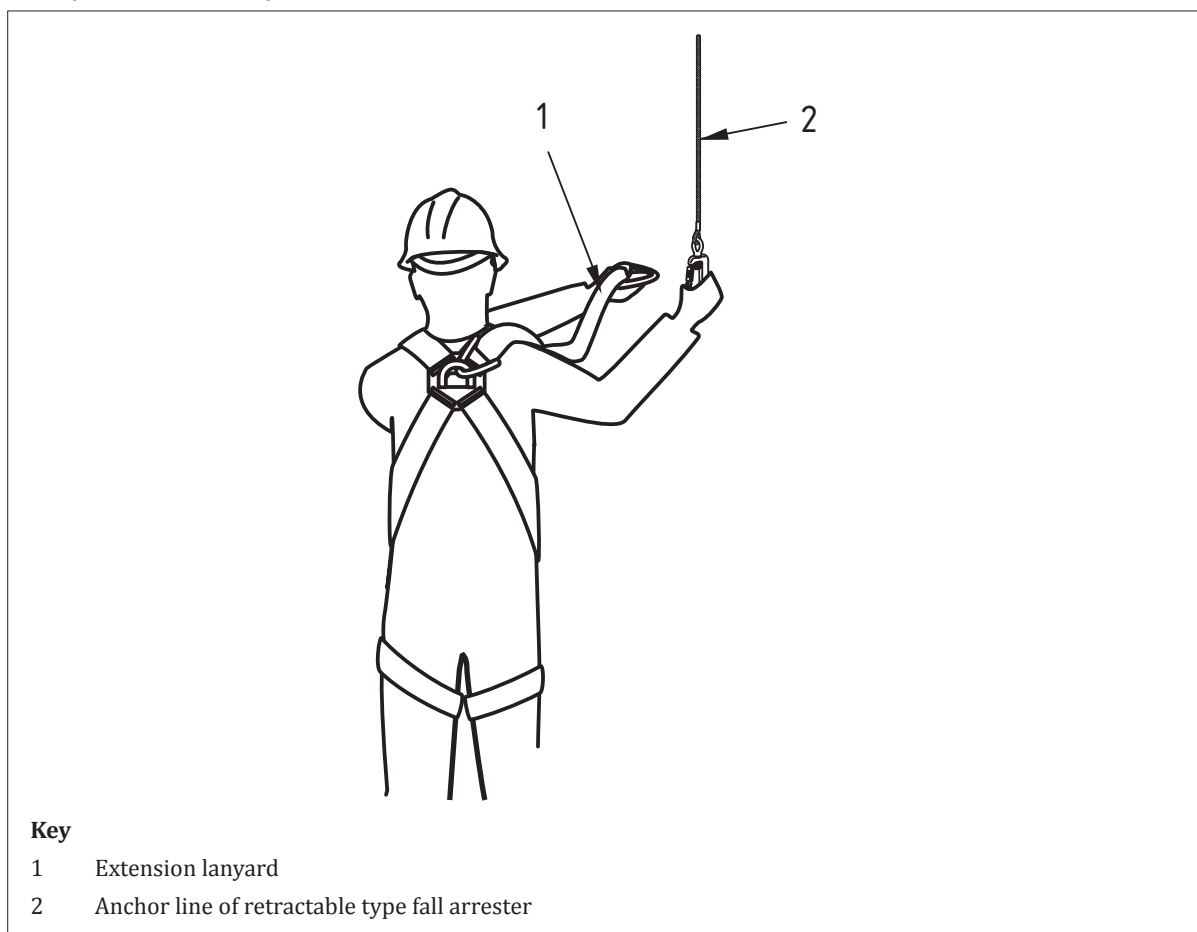
BS EN 363 specifies that a full body harness and a lanyard without an energy absorber shall not be used as a fall arrest system.

BS EN 354, which specifies requirements for lanyards for use in fall arrest systems specified in BS EN 363, requires that lanyards do not exceed 2 m in length, including the energy absorber, if applicable, and the connectors. Shorter lanyards should be used where possible, to minimize the free fall distance (see [9.7](#)) and swing fall problems (see [9.5.7.2](#)).

NOTE 1 BS EN 363 indicates that a retractable lanyard, which comprises the connecting element in a retractable type fall arrester, may be more than 2 m long.

NOTE 2 The free fall distance is that distance through which the user would fall before the fall arrest system begins to arrest the fall, measured from the user's position prior to the fall.

NOTE 3 A swing (or "pendulum") fall is a fall in which at the point of fall arrest the vertical trajectory of the user is diverted into a swing or pendular trajectory with significant horizontal velocity.

Figure 8 — *Use of an extension lanyard*

The position of the user's attachment point to the personal fall protection system in relation to the anchor point is of particular importance. This determines the "fall factor", which provides an indication of the length and severity of a potential fall.

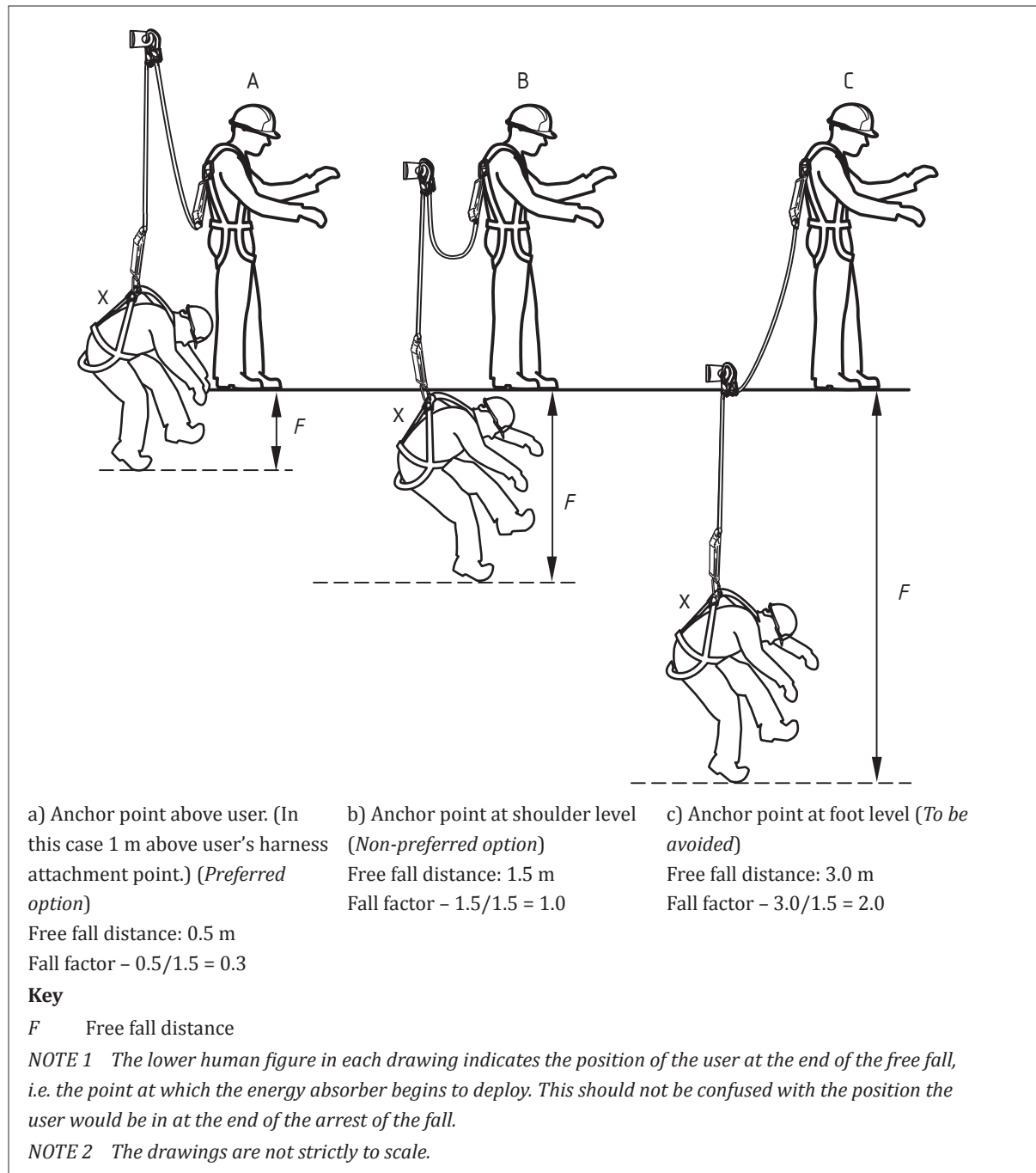
This is illustrated in [Figure 9](#), which shows three fall arrest situations. In each case the fall arrest system is based on a 1.5 m long energy absorbing lanyard and a distance between the attachment point on the user's harness and the user's feet of 1.5 m. The free fall distance is the vertical distance between the position of the user's feet immediately prior to the fall and the position of the user's feet at the point at which the lanyard has become taut and started to arrest the fall (distance F in [Figure 9](#)).

The fall factor is calculated by taking the free fall distance and dividing it by the length of lanyard available to arrest it (in this case the length of the energy absorbing lanyard prior to deployment of the energy absorber). In a normal work situation the maximum fall factor is 2. The fall factor should be kept as small as possible, i.e. the length of any potential fall should be minimized, for example by choosing an anchor point above the user; and the length of the lanyard should be kept as short as possible. As illustrated in [Figure 9](#), an anchor point above the user gives the smallest fall factor, so is the safest, and is the preferred option; an anchor point at shoulder level gives a larger fall factor and should only be used as a second choice; an anchor point at foot level gives the maximum fall factor and should be avoided if possible (see also [16.6.1](#)).

In situations where the user is likely to need to turn round repeatedly under the anchor point, a lanyard incorporating a swivel fitting should be used to avoid the lanyard twisting, untwisting, hocking or birdcaging.

Knots should not be used to make a termination in a lanyard that is already supplied with terminations, or to shorten its length.

Figure 9 — Illustration of free fall distances and the calculation of fall factors



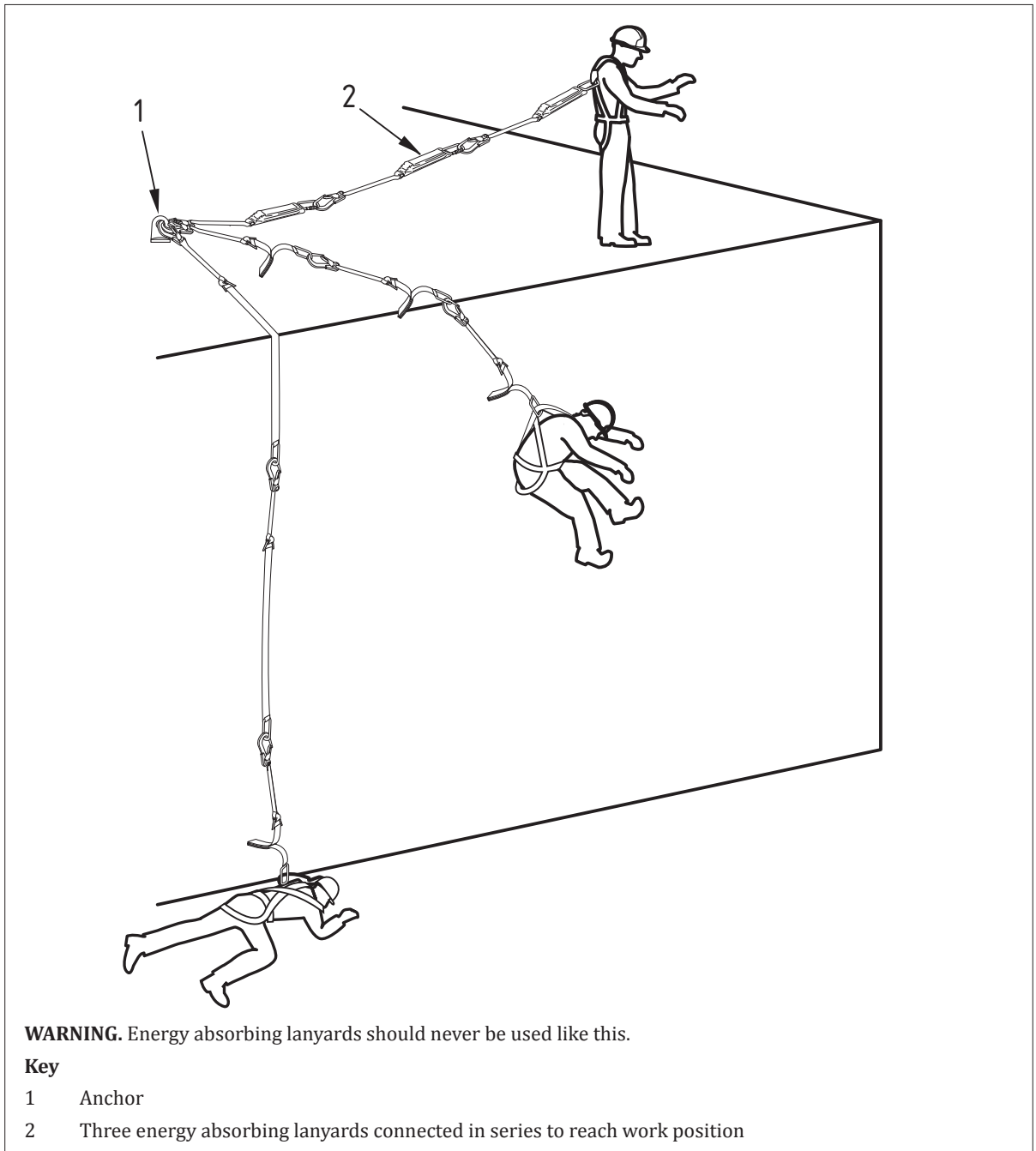
9.1.3.2 Energy absorbing lanyards

It is essential that an energy absorbing lanyard provides efficient energy absorption, i.e. the lanyard selected should be one that provides the lowest possible arrest force over the smallest possible arrest distance. Lanyards with tear-web type energy absorbers tend to have a smooth arrest force characteristic but since the energy is absorbed over a longitudinal tear in a strip of material the arrest distance is equal to twice the length of the tear. Lanyards with other types of energy absorbers tend to give smaller arrest distances but might not have such a smooth arrest force characteristic as those with the tear-web types. (See [12.8](#).)

Energy absorbing lanyards should not be connected together in series to increase overall length, because on arrest of a fall the increased free fall distance could lead to the user being subjected to excessive arrest forces or could allow them to hit the ground (see [Figure 10](#)). If the work position cannot be reached when a single energy absorbing lanyard is connected to the anchor point, then an anchor point nearer the work position should be utilized.

An energy absorbing lanyard should not be connected in series with another fall arrest device, e.g. a retractable type fall arrester, because on arrest of a fall the increased free fall distance could produce excessive forces on the device and cause failure, or could allow the user to hit the ground.

Figure 10 — *Illustration of the dangers of connecting energy absorbing lanyards in series to increase overall length*



9.2 Fall arrest systems based on one or more energy absorbing lanyards

9.2.1 Systems based on a single energy absorbing lanyard

Fall arrest systems based on a single energy absorbing lanyard, as illustrated in [Figure 11](#), are the most basic type. They can be used alone or as part of a more complex system, for example a system based on a vertical or a horizontal anchor line (see [9.4](#) and [9.5](#)).

A fall arrest system based on a single energy absorbing lanyard is temporary and mobile and is suitable as a back-up fall protection system for use with a work positioning system (see [10.2](#)). These systems can also be connected directly to the structure, eliminating the need for anchor points, which is useful in tower work (see [10.2.2.1](#)).

An energy absorbing lanyard comprises a lanyard terminated at one end with a connector for attachment either to an anchor point or directly to a structure. At the other end is an energy absorber, either integral with the lanyard or attached to it by means of a connector. The energy absorber is fitted with a connector for attachment to the user's harness. An example of an energy absorbing lanyard is shown in [Figure 12a](#).

The energy absorbing lanyard remains unloaded during normal work at height. In the event of a fall, the sharp downward pull on the lanyard operates the energy absorber, which absorbs the energy generated by the fall, thus decelerating the user and bringing them to a stop within a short distance (see [Figure 13](#)). The user then remains suspended by the lanyard to await rescue.

For details of energy absorbers, see [12.8](#).

When using a single energy absorbing lanyard, the user's range of movement is limited by the length of the lanyard, i.e. the limit of the range of movement is the point at which the lanyard becomes taut (see [Figure 14a](#)). To move beyond this point the user would need to disconnect the lanyard (see [Figure 14b](#)), move to the new position and then reconnect the lanyard (see [Figure 14c](#)). No fall protection would be provided during the period between disconnection and reconnection of the lanyard. Working in this way is not recommended.

9.2.2 Systems based on two energy absorbing lanyards

In situations where the user requires a range of movement greater than the lanyard length, for example when ascending, descending or traversing a structure, use of a fall arrest system based on two energy absorbing lanyards is necessary to enable the user to move safely, as shown in [Figure 15](#).

The two lanyards are used in relay, being disconnected and reconnected in turn as the user proceeds so that at all times during the movement there is a connection between the user and the structure. The user is initially connected to the structure by the first lanyard. When the user reaches the point at which this lanyard is fully extended (see [Figure 15](#), view A), the second lanyard is connected to the next anchor point on the user's route (see [Figure 15](#), view B). The first lanyard is then disconnected to allow the user to move on (see [Figure 15](#), view C). This procedure is repeated until the route has been safely negotiated (see [Figure 15](#), view D).

These systems have the disadvantage that they can be slow and laborious to use. Also, carrying out repeated connection and disconnection can result in the user suffering musculoskeletal problems.

Two energy absorbing lanyards should not remain connected to an anchor other than in the momentary act of maintaining continuous connection.

NOTE Typically, a twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyard (see [9.2.3](#)) is preferred to using two energy absorbing lanyards.

Systems based on a vertical or a horizontal anchor line are more efficient (see [9.4](#) and [9.5](#)).

9.2.3 Systems based on a twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyard

NOTE 1 Twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyards are specified in [BS 8513](#).

NOTE 2 This type of lanyard is sometimes referred to as a “Y-shaped” energy absorbing lanyard.

To make climbing with two lanyards more efficient, a system can be used which incorporates two lanyards combined with a single energy absorber, to save weight and thus improve climbing ergonomics (see [Figure 16](#)).

A twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyard comprises two lanyards each terminated at one end with a connector for attachment either to an anchor point or directly to a structure. The other end of each lanyard is attached to a single energy absorber in such a way that either lanyard can transmit a load to the energy absorber. The energy absorber is fitted with a connector for attachment to the user's harness. An example of a twin-tailed energy absorbing lanyard is shown in [Figure 12b](#)).

The two lanyards are used in relay as described in [9.2.2](#).

When only one of the lanyards is connected to the anchor point, the second lanyard should be left to hang free, or should also be connected to the anchor point. The second lanyard should not be attached to the user's harness or to their belt or clothing unless there is a specially designed “parking point” for this purpose, designed to separate from the harness, belt or clothing, as this could limit the extension of the energy absorber in the event of a fall, which would cause excessive arrest forces to be applied to the user and to the fall arrest system; this is particularly important when the lanyards used are relatively short.

These systems have similar disadvantages to those described in [9.2.2](#).

Figure 11 — Example of a fall arrest system based on a single energy absorbing lanyard

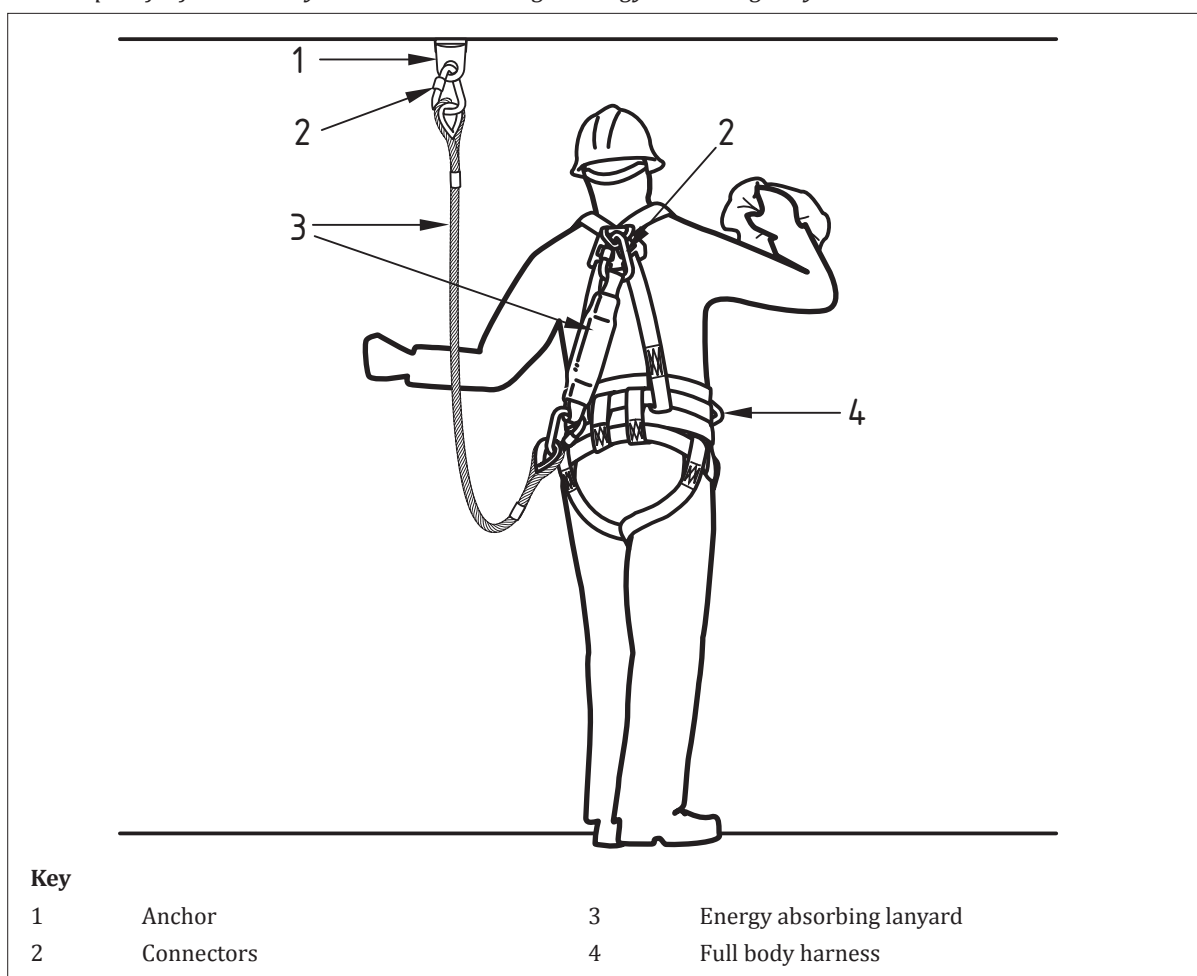


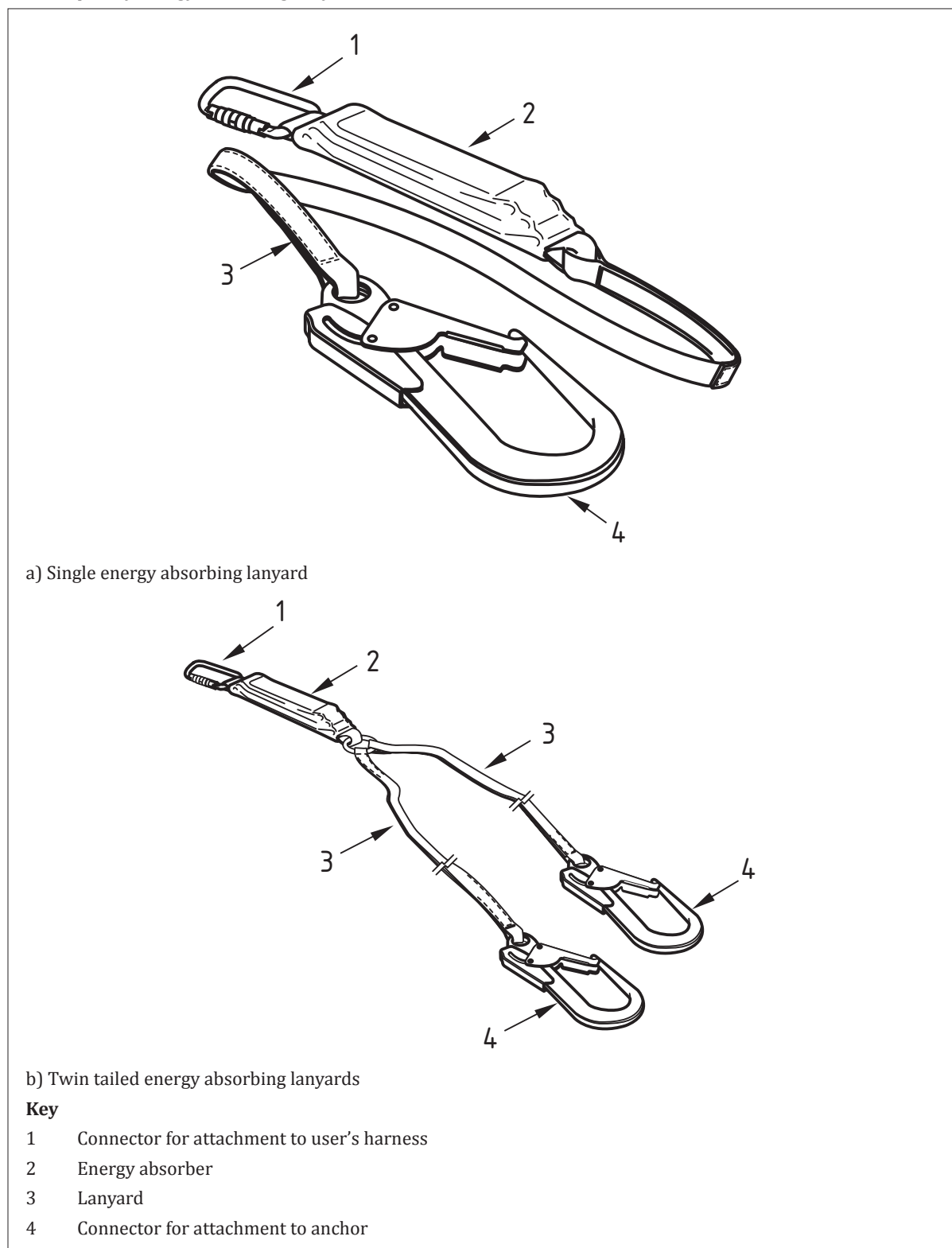
Figure 12 — Examples of energy absorbing lanyards

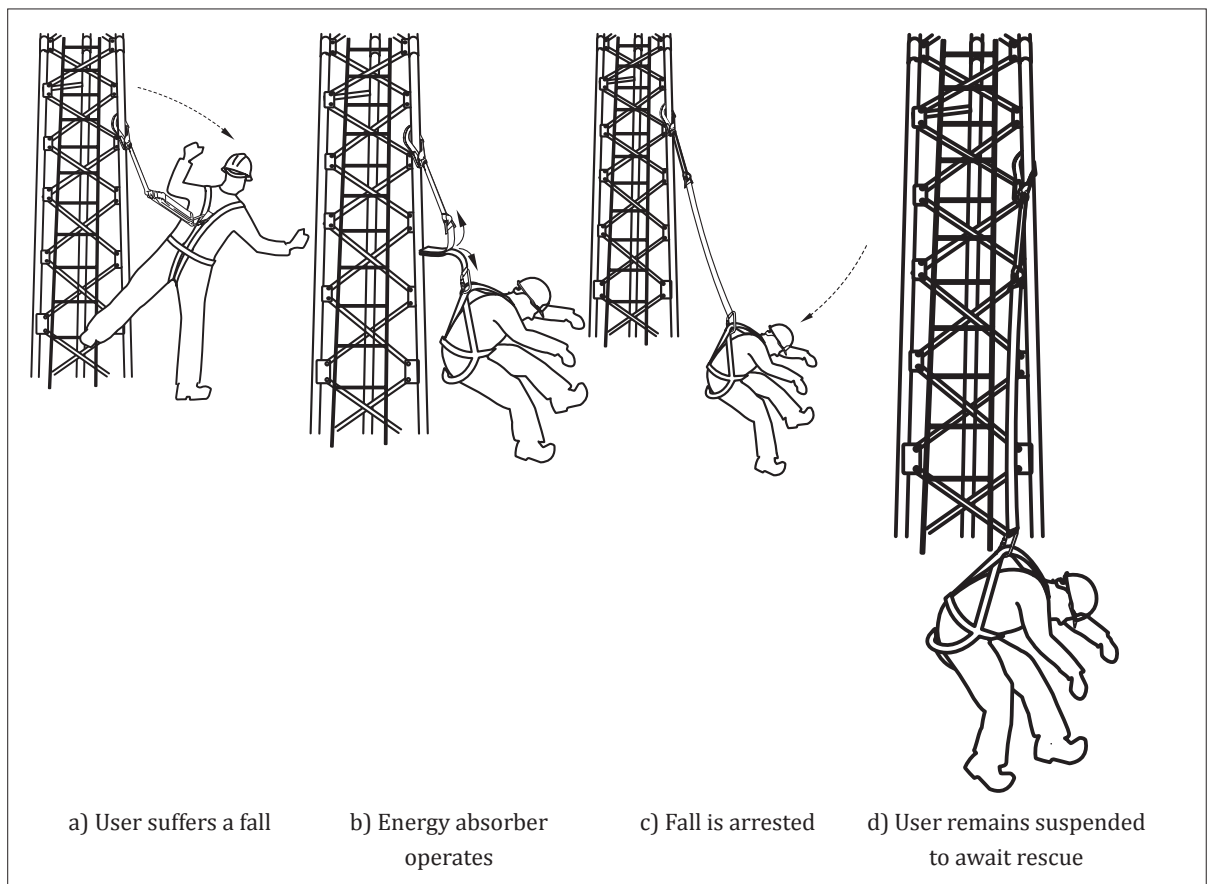
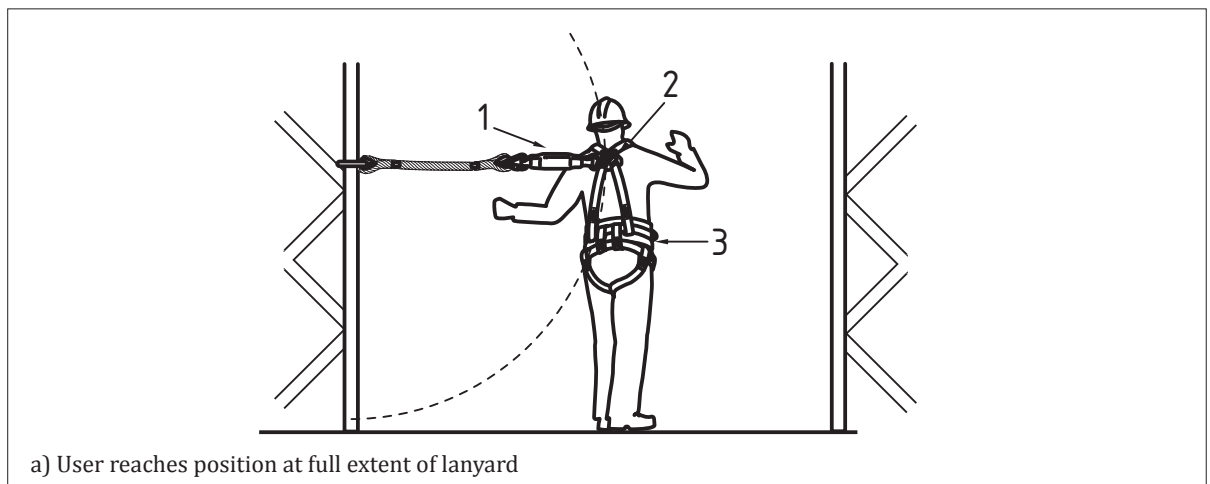
Figure 13 — Illustration of an energy absorbing lanyard operating to arrest a fall**Figure 14** — Limitations and dangers of using a single energy absorbing lanyard where a range of movement greater than lanyard length is required

Figure 14 — Limitations and dangers of using a single energy absorbing lanyard where a range of movement greater than lanyard length is required (continued)

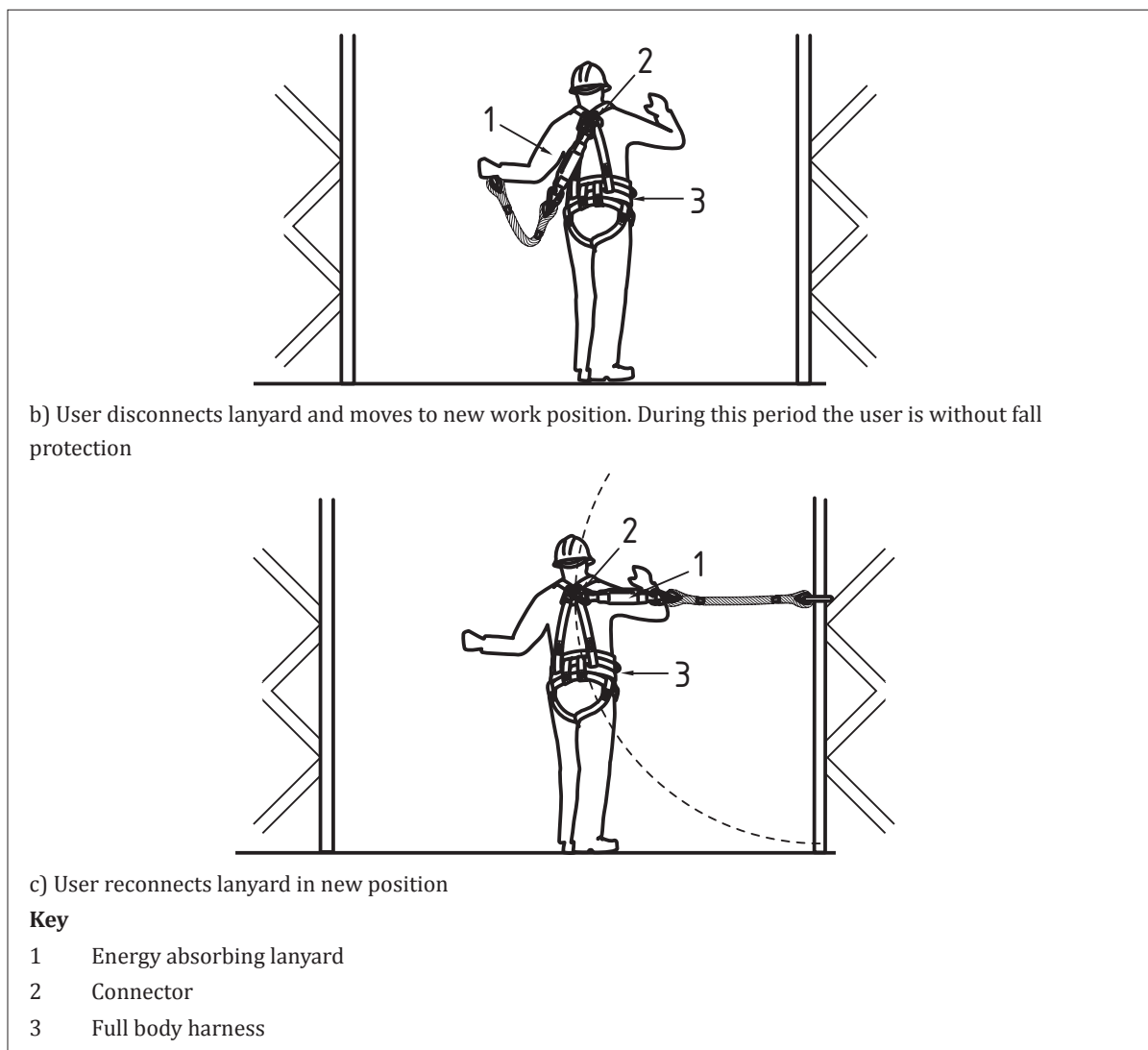


Figure 15 — Ensuring continuous connection to the structure by using two energy absorbing lanyards in relay