

Safety and health alert

16/04 Fall injuries abseil instructor

Incident

An Abseil Instructor was seriously injured during a flying fox recreational activity when the lanyard attached to the Instructor's harness failed, resulting in the Instructor falling approximately 16 metres from a tree to the ground.

Factors

- Lanyard was of a tubular nylon webbing construction design that was susceptible to damage.
- Lanyard anchorage point was positioned in close proximity to moving parts of flying fox.

Recommendations

1. Employers and employees engaged in work at heights need to maintain continual vigilance in the selection, use and maintenance of gear used in fall injury prevention systems.
2. Work carried out at heights should be in accordance with the Western Australian Code of Practice 'Prevention of Falls at Workplaces' and the Australian New Zealand Standard, AS/NZS 1891 series 'Industrial Fall-Arrest Systems and Devices'.
3. A competent person should inspect fall arrest equipment prior to use to ensure appropriate selection, fixing and positioning.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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