

## STANDARDS FOR EDGE TESTED PFPE: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Quick reference guide



WHY?

**USING PFPE THAT DOESN'T MEET EDGE TESTING REQUIREMENTS CAN BE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS**, especially when horizontal anchorage (at ground or shoulder level) is the only option - for example on roofs. Simply put, non-compliant self-retracting lifelines (SRLs) or shock-absorbing lanyards (SALs) are at risk of being severed against an edge in the event of a fall.

### STANDARDS TO LOOK OUT FOR

When it comes to fall arresters, **EN 360 and EN 355** are the two standards to look out for. EN 360 pertains to retractable fall arrest lifelines (also known as SRLs) while EN 355 covers requirements for energy absorbers (also known as SALs). They both certify that the equipment meets minimum safety requirements that make it fit for purpose, meaning that its ability to arrest a fall within a distance of 2m has been put to the test. However, these standards do not currently specify that SRLs and SALs for horizontal applications need to undergo edge testing.

### POSSIBLE CHANGES TO STANDARDS

In future, **A REVISION OF EN 360 AND EN 355 IS LIKELY TO COME INTO FORCE**, requiring SRLs and SALs that are anchored horizontally to be edge tested. This test will prove that the SRL or SAL will not be damaged or, worse, severed by forceful contact with an edge in the event of a fall. Two European coordination documents, VG11.060 (for SRLs) and VG11.074 (for SALs), have already been drawn up to formalise the edge testing requirements. They mandate that, in addition to meeting the general requirements of EN 360:2002 and EN 355:2002, SRLs and lanyards must carry evidence of dynamic performance, dynamic strength and static strength within a horizontal arrangement and stress over an edge.



Do you work at height day in, day out? Do you often find yourself stepping near a leading edge? Then you need to use personal fall protection equipment (PFPE) that is edge tested. Knowing the relevant industry standards is critical.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR EQUIPMENT INSTRUCTIONS



The coordination documents also require that suppliers of edge tested equipment for horizontal applications will have to include the **FOLLOWING KEY POINTS** with the equipment's usage instructions:

- 1.** If a risk assessment shows the potential fall edge to be 'sharp' or 'not free from burs' then appropriate precautions must be taken to rule out the risk of falling over an edge. Alternatively, edge protection should be mounted or the manufacturer contacted.
- 2.** The anchor point should not be below the user's standing level. It should be either at the same height as the edge or above the edge.
- 3.** For SRLs, the required clearance below the edge at which the fall might occur must be defined.
- 4.** Lanyards should be used in such a way that there is no slack rope.
- 5.** Special rescue measures are to be stipulated and instilled in the workforce through training.

### EMPLOYER'S DUTY OF CARE

Manufacturers, importers and distributors of PFPE are ultimately responsible for ensuring that equipment to be used near edges, especially in horizontal applications, complies with the latest industry standards. They should also keep customers informed about any upcoming changes to standards and regulations and provide evidence of how their products will meet these.

However, it is still important for employers and health and safety professionals – particularly those responsible for selecting PFPE – to know and understand the new and potential requirements. By doing so they will be able to **ASK SUPPLIERS FOR THE NECESSARY PRODUCT INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION AND SEEK EVIDENCE THAT EDGE TESTING HAS BEEN CONDUCTED** with products that are certified accordingly.

For further information on this topic, download 'Technical Guide: Regulatory Requirements for PPE for Working at Height' [here](#).