Fall Arrest Suspension Trauma

MEDICAL EMERGENCY CARD

KEEP THIS CARD IN YOUR WALLET FOR USE IN FALL RESCUE

A fallen worker can die from suspension trauma (orthostatic shock) if not rescued in time and treated properly.

Even under ideal circumstances, with a rescue plan in place, suspension trauma must be treated as an emergency. It can be fatal in as little as 10 minutes. Typically, suspension trauma causes death in 15 to 40 minutes.

Suspension trauma traps deoxygenated blood in the veins of the legs.

DO NOT PLACE A RESCUED WORKER IN A HORIZONTAL POSITION.

If there is no apparent injury, place the rescued worker in a sitting position with knees close to the chest. This is called the **W** position. The worker should remain in this position for at least 30 minutes.

See Emergency Medical Responder advice on the back of this card.

ARIBA

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Fall Arrest Suspension Trauma

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS) ALERT

A worker experiencing a fall arrested by a Personal Fall Arrest System (PFAS) can die from suspension trauma (orthostatic shock). Fall arrest suspension can trap deoxygenated blood in the veins of the legs.

Post-rescue death is caused by the heart's inability to tolerate the abruptly increased flow of carbon dioxide-saturated blood from the legs. Whether or not the suspended worker has lost consciousness, the rescue team must be careful in handling the victim. Do not put a rescued worker in a horizontal position, whether conscious or not.

See OSHA Bulletin on Suspension Trauma
www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib032404.html

American Road & Transportation Builders Association Work Zone Safety Consortium

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