



## SUSPENDED RESCUE

### A Risky Business



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**SUSPENDED RESCUE** methods are used when a fallen worker is suspended, incapacitated and inaccessible. A suspended rescue means that both the rescuer and the fallen worker are suspended simultaneously. In many cases, both people are suspended from the same line. Suspended rescues are riskier because both the rescuer and the fallen worker are in a dangerous position. The technical expertise required by the rescuer is considerably higher than other types of rescue because of all the rigging needed to reach, connect and transfer the fallen worker must be done while suspended.

Suspended rescues originated with mountaineering and professional fire services. Suspended rescue is useful for those applications because it offers great versatility. Both mountaineering and fire services must respond to accidents without advance knowledge of the situations. Because they do not have advance knowledge of the physical equipment and locations where a rescue is necessary, their rescue methods must be flexible. Industrial locations and work sites allow rescuers to be more proactive instead of reactive because it is possible to predict where workers will be suspended. Employers can plan rescue methods in advance and determine whether self- or assisted-rescue can be used instead of suspended rescue methods.

Employers should make every effort to avoid suspended rescues. The equipment and practices used are similar to those used by

professionals and offer little margin of error. Significant time is required to train rescuers on suspended rescue and ensure their skills are not forgotten.

Most suspended rescues require the rescuer to set up a manual descent control system and then descend to the fallen worker. The rescuer stops above the fallen worker and then connects to him/her. Traditionally, the worker's fall arrest system was cut, releasing him/her from the support system and transferring the worker onto the rescuer's system. Cutting the lanyard was necessary because it wasn't possible to raise the worker using traditional rescue devices. Accidents have occurred using this method because the worker's system was severed before they were connected to the rescuer's system. Technology and equipment now exists that enable rescuers to disconnect fallen workers without cutting their support system, thus eliminating a potential fall hazard.

