

# gbea SAFETY TOOLBOX TALKS



## Leading Edge Safety

Working at heights is a common part of construction, and one of the hazards is the leading edge of work surfaces, both part of the permanent structure, as well as temporary platforms. We make preparations to work safely at heights by either barricading the leading edge, or by using engineered personal restraint systems. These strategies keep employees from getting to or falling from the leading edge.

Most personal fall arresting lanyards and retractables are **NOT** designed to go across any leading edge during a fall. Retractables and lanyards are designed to reduce a falling employee's impact force during a fall at a straight or unobstructed pull.

During a fall, the leading edge usually becomes the point of contact, and at that point, the fall force applied to a retractable or lanyard can be around 5000 lbs. of pressure over the edge. The result is a rope on a sharp edge: it could snap and tear, and the employee will continue to fall.

### How Can You Prevent a Leading Edge Fall?

- **Eliminate the hazard:** Set up barricades along all leading edges.
- Use a restraint system will keep the employee from reaching the edge... (Safety leash) eliminating the ability to reach the edge.
- Ensure that your personal fall arrest system is **DESIGNED** for leading edge contact.
- Remember that most lanyards and retractables are **NOT** designed to make contact with the leading edge or any other surface.
- Regularly inspect your fall protection equipment, especially lanyards, retractables, and ropes, to ensure that they are in good condition.