

# TOOLBOX TALK

June 2017

## TOOL TETHERS PROTECT AGAINST FALLING-OBJECT INJURIES

Gravity can be a killer. Many objects on worksites can become dislodged, dropped or kicked and fall onto a person below. Due to the pull of gravity, the farther an object falls, the faster it falls, creating force at the landing. For example, an 8-pound wrench dropped 200 feet would hit with a force of 2,833 pounds per square inch – the equivalent of a small car hitting a 1-square-inch area.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 52, 260 “struck by falling object” OSHA recordable incidents in 2015. That’s one injury that required medical intervention caused by a dropped object every 10 minutes across the U.S. Of those incidents, 247 resulted in a fatality. Tool tethers were designed to help prevent those types of incidents.

### Think of tool tethering as fall protection for tools.

As with fall protection for humans, the proper set up for tool fall protection or tool tethering requires three elements:

- ◆ The tool,
- ◆ The tether, and
- ◆ The attachment point.

The three elements work together to form a safety system.

- ◆ The first consideration is the weight of the tool (or object) to be tethered and then properly matching the tether’s rated capacity. Using a higher rated capacity tether may be uncomfortable and more expensive than using a light-rated tether.
- ◆ It is also important to have an attachment point on the tool or to be able to firmly attach the tether to the handle.
- ◆ Next, consider the necessary tether length so you can comfortably reach the required surface to properly use the tool when it’s anchored. Keep in mind that excess slack may become a snag hazard. Tethers are designed to be anchored to your belt, your wrist or even your hard hat; some are conductive and some aren’t.



**Bungee Tether**



**Coiled Tether**



**Web Tether**



**Retractable Tether**