

HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISORY

SELF-RETRACTING DEVICES FOR LEADING EDGES

Self-retracting devices are commonly used in the construction industry to help prevent falls. There are several types of these devices, self-retracting lifelines (SRLs) which are anchored overhead, self-retracting lifelines with retrieval capabilities (SRL-Rs), and self-retracting lifelines with leading edge capabilities (SRL-LEs). This advisory addresses self-retracting lifelines with leading edge capabilities (SRL-LEs).

According to the CSA Standard Z259.2.2, “Self-retracting devices” are suitable for applications where it is anchored lower than the elevation of the dorsal d-ring on the worker’s full body harness, and where the extracted lifeline can bear against an edge or surface during fall arrest.

Based on this, these devices have been recommended for use for where there is a chance that a fall could occur over an edge—roofing, high-rise formwork, and receiving materials at elevation, to name a few.

The CSA Fall Protection Technical committee has issued a safety bulletin cautioning their use. The bulletin states:

“Historically, self-retracting devices have not been designed or tested for falls over an edge. In the new edition of CSA Z259.2.2-17 self-retracting devices, it includes a new class self-retracting lifeline with leading edge capability (Class SRL-LE) with test provisions for over-edge testing.

As per Clause 7.7.2.3 of CSA Z259.2.2-17, it requires testing over a sharp steel edge. Testing over concrete, stone, steel decking or other materials are not covered by this edition of the standard. If you are using equipment in and around edges not covered by this standard contact the equipment manufacturer to confirm use in the specific application.

Do not use class SRL devices over any leading edge and only use class SRL-LE devices over leading edges approved by the manufacturer.”

This information can be found on the CSA Website at: <https://community.csagroup.org/message/90802#90802>

It is important to note that in Ontario, Section 93(3) of the Construction Regulations states: “All vehicles, machines, tools and equipment shall be used in accordance with any operating manuals issued by the manufacturers.” Section 26(2) goes on to require that “An employer shall ensure that a worker who may use a fall protection system is adequately trained in its use and given adequate oral and written instructions by a competent person.” These sections of the Regulations apply to the equipment being addressed in the CSA safety bulletin, self-retracting lifelines with leading edge capabilities (SRL-LEs).

The CSA Fall Protection Technical Committee is regarded as a source of information that many employers and workers view as providing credible, reliable, and current information on the selection, care and use of fall protection equipment.

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