

From his perch atop a shipping container, a worker demonstrates SkyHook, a new fall restraint system.



# New apparatus protects workers from falls

By Stuart Colcleugh

It has been said that necessity is the mother of invention. Mauro Celenza, owner of Fremantle Trailer Repair Ltd., knows first-hand the truth of that old adage.

Last year, in dire need of a fall restraint system that didn't exist – with business from one of his largest customers at stake – the Pitt Meadows businessman invented a remarkable new apparatus that could prevent injury and save lives.

Celenza's company is in the business of repairing damaged trucks, tractor-trailers, and shipping containers. The work often places his employees on roofs three metres or more above the ground, at significant risk of falling.

In North America, falls from elevation kill and injure thousands of workers every year, says WCB safety officer Ken Boucher. In the B.C. trailer service and

repair industry, such falls have resulted in more than 141 WCB injury claims in the last five years.

"I'd never really thought much about the safety risk before," says Celenza. "I've got 22 employees and nobody has ever fallen off anything they were working on, so I didn't think it was an issue." His wake-up call came in May 2002 when a safety inspector noticed one of his employees working atop a shipping container without fall protection. Until that time, Celenza was not aware that his company was not complying with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. "We were basically told to cease and desist until we had the proper equipment." The trouble was, there were no suitable fall restraint systems on the market, short of a few cumbersome, expensive harnessing rigs.

After weeks of fruitless searching, Celenza decided to design his own system. With the help of a friend and business associate, Bob Fulton of Fulton Engineering, the journeyman mechanic began testing various designs. "It had to be simple, small, and light so my guys could easily pick it up and put it in their trucks or on top of a container with their other tools." And it had to meet occupational health and safety codes.

### **A light and portable solution**

Two months later, the SkyHook Fall Protection System was born. SkyHook is elegant in its simplicity – so much so, you wonder why no one ever thought of it before. The key component is a cable ratcheting system or hand-operated winch called a "take-up." Two anchor cables



attach to the edges of roofs on steel and aluminum shipping containers, tractor trailers, and rail cars, using specially-designed three-way cable hooks or end clamps. The kit also includes a safety harness and an adjustable 1.2- to 2-metre lanyard, which is hooked between the static line and a D-ring on the back of the harness. It takes only a few minutes to ratchet the anchoring cables tight, attach the lanyard, and begin working in complete safety. And it is flexible enough to accommodate various container roof details.

"It's a little constricting compared to what I'm used to, which is working without a harness," admits Fremantle employee Sam Wedzinga. "But it's mandatory and it is better for safety. Plus it's not complicated to operate and you don't have to haul a whack of stuff up onto the roof."

"It's a simple, simple device," says Celenza. "It costs under \$600. One person can operate it and lift it. It fits in a tiny toolbox. It sets up in no time. And it works flawlessly. It's a no-brainer." An added benefit: Skyhook is flexible enough to be used in a variety of other

businesses, including railways, shipping companies, port operators, and long-shoring and stevedoring operations.

The bottom line, says Boucher, is it protects workers from falls. "It's simple and portable and it works very well. A success story all around."

## LCS Compliance Training



**Cranes And Rigging  
Mobile Equipment  
Industrial Forklift  
Bobcat and Loader  
Elevated Work Platforms**



**Training for all Industries**

**Serving All Of BC**

**Fall Protection  
Confined Spaces  
Dangerous Goods  
Level 1 First Aid  
Ladder Safety  
WHMIS For Workers**

**250-490-8055**

**www.liftcrew.ca**



**COMFORT ON CONCRETE. DURABLE. GUARANTEEABLE.**



SEE STORE FOR  
DETAILS

**SUPERSOLE 2.0. THE MIDSOLE'S  
FOR COMFORT. THE OUTSOLE'S  
FOR DURABILITY. AND THE  
GUARANTEE IS FOR A YEAR.**

**SIZE MATTERS: 5 TO 16  
WIDTHS: B.D.E.EE.EEE.EEEE**

#26-2755 Lougheed  
Port Coquitlam, B.C. V3B 5Y0  
**604.942.6114**

13745-72nd Ave.  
Surrey, B.C. V3W 2P2  
**604.543.7730**

4707 Kingsway  
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 2C3  
**604.439.1212**

**The Best Friend's Your Feet Ever Had!**