Retractable Fall Arrestors
A Brief Guide to BS EN 360

Retractable fall arrestors are a type of fall arrest device that are usually worn in conjunction with a full body harness. They consist of a lanyard that retracts and extends in length from within the main housing. They act in a similar manner to a seatbelt, with an automatic braking system that immediately engages when the lanyard extends at an excessive speed, such as it would if a user was involved in a fall.

Retractable Fall Arrestors intended to be used in this way, should meet the requirements of BS EN 360 which sets the standards for construction, materials markings and testing criteria for Retractable Type Fall Arrestors.

Retractable type fall arrestors are available in several different sizes and some feature a retrieval system that can be used to winch a fallen casualty back to a position of relative safety. Some lightweight models can replace a traditional lanyard attachment to a full body harness and be worn comfortably throughout a full work day, while other more heavy weight models will allow a much greater length of extension of the lanyard but as a result are heavier and less portable. These are usually attached to a specific anchor point with the attachment at the end of the lanyard connected to the fixing point on to a full body harness.
Other criteria stipulated includes the arrest distance and how to calculate the minimum clearance required below the user.

Arrest Distance is the distance someone may be allowed to freefall in the event of a fall. BS EN 360 requires that the retractable fall arrestors have a maximum arrest distance of 2 metres.

Minimum clearance should be calculated as the arrest distance plus 1 metre*. So if a retractable fall arrestor has an arrest distance of 2 metres then a user must have a minimum clearance below of 3 metres to avoid collision with obstacles or the ground.

*Based on a test subject weighing 100kg

Refer to BS EN 355 info sheet for information on marking requirements for retractable fall arrestors.