A full body harness is designed to support the user during a fall and continue to support the user after a fall has been arrested. BS EN 361 is the standard to which a full body harness sold in the UK must be constructed and tested.

A full body harness is usually constructed of webbing. The different webbing parts are described as primary straps or secondary straps. Primary straps are the straps which, under testing, were found to be supporting the body in the event of a fall. Secondary straps will not directly support the body during a fall but will help ensure the integrity and shape of the harness both during a fall and any subsequent suspension.

Under BS EN 361 the width of primary straps must be no less than 40mm and the width of secondary straps must be no less than 20mm. Full body harnesses must be constructed from materials that are free from sharp edges or burred ends which may injure the user.

The webbing straps of the full body harness must have stitching of comparable strength to the main webbing material, and the stitching must be of a contrasting colour to the webbing so as to make the identification of any defects or damage to stitching easily visible.

Any metallic parts or fittings to the full body harness must have corrosion protection that conforms to the separate standard EN 362.

Depending on the intended use of the harness, whether it be fall arrest, work positioning or work restraint, it may be manufactured with different attachment points for fall arrest devices. These attachment points must be positioned above the centre of gravity of the user and if metal must also conform to EN 362.
Any designated attachment points must be clearly marked by the manufacturer, by indelible means or stamped into the material, with the letter, capital ‘A’. Only fall arrest or restraint devices may be attached to these points. Users should never try to alter the position of attachment points or try to form an ad-hoc attachment point on the harness.

A full body harness should have an identification label or other means of displaying information.

The label must include the model and identification number of the harness as well as the European Standard that the harness has been constructed and tested to, i.e. BS EN 361.

Other information to be included:

- Manufacturing date
- Size
- CE reference

If there is any doubt as to the suitability or conformance of a harness then you should contact Leach’s or the manufacturer before the equipment is used.