



Autodesk and AGC to Provide Construction Industry with Custom-Fitting Safety Harnesses for Women

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Construction technology provider and national trade organization launch grant program to help address industry need for better-fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) for women working at heights

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Nov. 12, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- According to the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), falls are the leading cause of private sector worker fatalities in the construction industry. Everyone who works at heights, whether it's on a roof, scaffolding, or the edge of a tall building, should have properly fitting safety harnesses, yet not all contractors have the supply they need to better protect women in construction. To help address this, [Autodesk](#) is funding a grant program with one of the largest construction trade organizations – the [Associated General Contractors of America \(AGC\)](#) – to supply select, in-need member contractors with fall protection harnesses sized for women who work at heights.



The program comes at a time when 80 percent of construction firms [report](#) having a hard time filling the hourly craft positions that represent the bulk of the construction workforce. Women represent approximately 10 percent of the overall construction labor force¹, with even lower representation in trades positions, and one of the largest demographics with the potential to fill the gap in labor. To help attract and retain more women in the field, jobsites need to recognize and meet the needs of a gender-diverse workforce, including properly sized and comfortable PPE.

"The construction industry agrees safety must be everyone's priority, but we also need to recognize when safety needs aren't being met for some workers. Technology is improving jobsite safety, but it's not a silver bullet," said Allison Scott, director, Autodesk Construction Solutions. "Construction is – and will continue to be – a people-driven business. The industry needs more people, and women must feel safe and welcome on jobsites if we want them to choose a career in construction. Ultimately, when we address safety for women, we improve safety for everyone."

Ill-fitting PPE can range from uncomfortable to downright dangerous. For example, a fall protection harness that's too loose may still catch a woman when the scaffolding beneath her collapses, but it could seriously injure her neck or shoulder in the process. This not only affects the injured worker, but her employer as well. The contractor incurs lost time, productivity and – potentially – a costly worker's compensation claim.

"One of the most effective ways to successfully recruit more women into high-paying construction careers is to make sure firms are able to provide safety equipment that makes them even safer," said Stephen E. Sandherr, the chief executive officer of the Associated General Contractors of America. "We want to leverage these grants to encourage our member firms to provide a wider range of safety equipment and continue to expand the diversity of our workforce."

A top concern of contractors is the safety of their employees, and many are recognizing the shifting landscape in the construction workforce and taking steps toward a more inclusive, injury-free job site. Earlier this year, [Skanska](#) created gloves and two customized safety vests designed for women and based on feedback from its own female employees. The company plans to expand the apparel line soon to include surveyor vests and high-visibility jackets for winter.

The grant program will fund the purchase of approximately 300 fall protection harnesses sized for women. AGC members can apply for the grants until the application window closes on January 10, 2020. Winners will be notified in advance and honored at the AGC's annual convention, to be held March 9-12, 2020 in Las Vegas, NV.

AGC members can apply for the grant [here](#).

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About The Associated General Contractors of America

The Associated General Contractors of America works to ensure the continued success of the commercial construction industry by advocating for supportive federal, state and local measures; providing opportunities for firms to learn about ways to become more accomplished and connecting them with the resources and individuals they need to be successful business and corporate citizens.

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¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 2019, <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat18.htm>



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Allison Masci, Autodesk, allison.masci@autodesk.com, (857) 409-6500; Brian Turmail, Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), brian.turmail@agc.org, (703) 459-0238