Knot Fails In Fall Arrest Equipment

A knot came undone in a fall arrest system, causing a window washer to fall six stories to the ground. He died of his injuries three days later.

His boss had offered him a safer fall arrest harness system which used more secure clips and D-rings instead of knots, but he had rejected it and kept his older safety belt system. The fall arrest device he was using was in good condition. However, the knot which the man had used to tie the fall arrest device to his safety belt failed because it had been tied incorrectly.

The victim's choice to use an obsolete, inadequate safety device was a fatal one. Fall arrest equipment which requires the user to tie knots is unsafe. Safety harnesses, not safety belts, should be used when working at heights. Make sure your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the best available – it could save your life.