



Overhead Conveyor Fall Protection for a Distribution Center

Features and Benefits

Impact absorbing catch net protects workers from falling objects.

Versatile design allows for easy retrieval of lost product.

Interconnecting panel size allows for changes in system configuration.

Industry Group:

Protective Guarding Manufacturing Association



Panel matrix enabled easy product access.

The challenge was to engineer a system of catch nets to protect employees working under a fast moving overhead conveyor system. In addition, the caught objects must remain undamaged and be retrieved quickly without impeding the workflow.

An American based multinational consumer goods company, producing personal care products operates a large distribution center with approximately 640 linear feet of flex link, high-speed, overhead conveyor.

Due to the high speeds of the conveyor system, product would often fly off of the conveyor and into various random areas, and often hitting the workers below.

As a quick fix to remedy the issue, the company had purchased rolls of snow screen plastic netting at a local store and fastened the netting to each side of their overhead conveyor system with nylon zip ties.

The netting functioned as they had hoped for by catching fallen products and protecting the workers below. However, a new issue was created.

Since each run of netting was quite large and zip tied to the conveyor system, workers had a terrible time trying to retrieve fallen products out of the nets.

The retrieval process caused delays in the facility as workers had to literally stop production, get a step ladder and spend 10-15 minutes, trying to fish products out of the catch nets. In many instances, they would cut the netting & then zip-tie the seam back together. It was not a pretty sight, and the system got more ragged and patched over time.

The Solution:

The facility engineers contacted a local material handling dealer who in turn had their netting fabricator visit the job site.

Since the maximum weight of products was less than 10 lbs, the fabricator made a matrix of light weight custom net panels designed for easier handling and retrieval of goods caught in the netting.

Using a Velcro hook and loop fastener system stitched along the web seam of adjoining net panels, each panel to panel seam now allowed for easy separation and reconnection without impacting other portions of the netting system.

The panels were also made to a smaller size providing many accesses areas within the matrix of net panels.

The new netting was installed to the overhead conveyor using easy to release snap hooks to further enhance the versatility of the catch net system.

The end result allowed workers to easily undo a section of net, retrieve the lost item and then quickly refasten the net panel.

No tools were used and no netting was cut. The workflow now runs uninterrupted.



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