

Choosing a sling for your hoist



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Hoisting people is an essential part of care. It is used in many health, social care and education settings and carried out by a wide range of people.

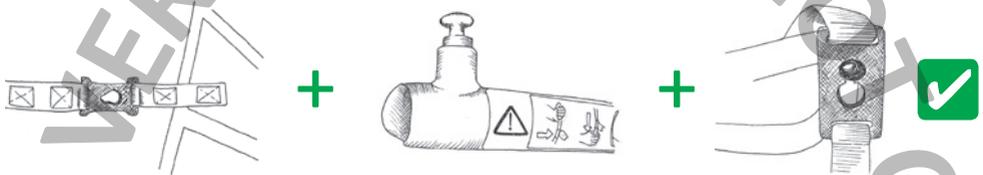
INTRODUCTION

This leaflet is a guide to aid managers, supervisors and staff with hoisting knowledge who are

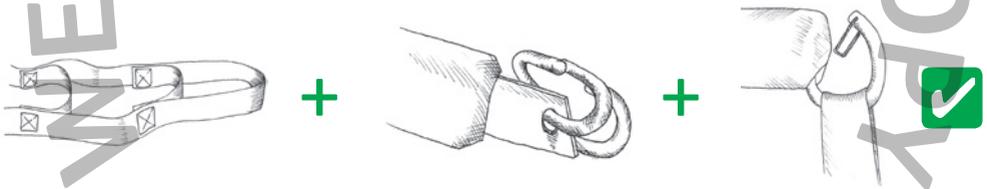
required to make informed decisions about choosing a sling for a hoist. It should be used in conjunction with local policies and procedures and the staff's knowledge of the person and the equipment to be used. See HSE Info Sheet (HSIS3) *Getting to Grips with Hoisting People*.

There are two main types of sling attachment:

A clip system



A loop system



YOU MUST NEVER MIX CLIP AND LOOP SYSTEMS



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WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

While most hoisting activities are safe, comfortable and dignified, there are a number of reports each year to the Health and Safety Executive [HSE] and the Medicines and Health Regulatory Authority [MHRA] of serious injuries occurring to people while hoisting.

Injuries that can occur during poor hoisting:

- Discomfort
- Skin lacerations
- Bruises
- Broken bones
- DEATH

Reasons why these injuries may occur:

- Wrong sized slings
- Wrong style of sling
- Poorly fitted slings
- Poorly maintained slings
- Poorly maintained hoists
- Exceeding the safe working load of a hoist, possibly leading to overturning of the hoist
- Insecure attachment of sling to hoist.

MANAGING THE RISKS

When hoisting a person, systems must be in place to ensure all hoisting is carried out in a safe, comfortable and dignified manner.

The following should be in place:

- A system of thorough examination and inspection of all hoists and slings every six months by a competent person as described in HSE L113 [Second edition] 2014.
- Sufficient hoists of the right type (e.g. standing or passive hoists).
- Sufficient slings of the right style and size for each individual. To avoid cross infection, **do not share slings** between patients without appropriate laundering.
- A sling that is compatible with the hoist (see compatibility test).
- An individual risk assessment and detailed hoisting plan for each person who needs hoisting (see Risk Assessment and Hoisting Plan).
- Training to ensure all staff are competent and confident (see Training).

- Manufacturer's instructions readily available for reference.
- Pre-use checks carried out by all staff (Love J (2015) *Safer Use of Hoists* – NBE leaflet 004).
- On-going supervision to ensure the hoisting plan is being followed.

RISK ASSESSMENT AND HOISTING PLAN

- The risk assessment should outline **all** the key risks associated with moving the person, including issues about the person, the environment they are in and any concerns about the health and wellbeing of the people who are caring for them.
- The hoisting plan should have sufficient details including size and style of sling, leg configuration and loops used, number of handlers needed and any other associated equipment or techniques.
- The plan should be reviewed and updated regularly and whenever a change occurs.

TRAINING

- Must be given on each piece of equipment that is to be used in the carer's workplace.
- Should be of sufficient time to enable them to acquire skills to ensure competency.
- Should give carers an understanding of what to do and what can go wrong.

CAN I MIX AND MATCH HOISTS AND SLINGS FROM DIFFERENT MANUFACTURERS?

The general guidance is to use a hoist and sling from the same manufacturer as they are designed to function safely together. However, this could be restrictive, especially if a suitable style is not available, e.g. an amputee sling.

You can use a sling from a different supplier if there is a compatibility statement provided from the sling manufacturer. It might be useful to print this out and file it in the person's hoisting plan.

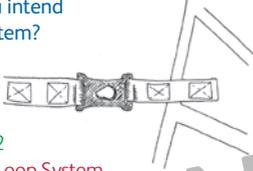
If there is no compatibility statement from the manufacturer, you must carry out a compatibility test.

COMPATIBILITY TEST

There are three sections to this test and following it through to the end will help you make a safe decision.

SECTION ONE – CLIP ATTACHMENT

- 1** Does the sling you intend to use have a clip system?



Yes > Go to question 2

No > Go to Section 2 Loop System

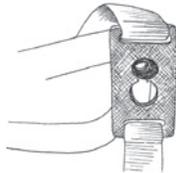
- 2** Does the hoist you intend to use have an attachment for the clip?



Yes > Go to question 3

No > Abandon the planned procedure

- 3** Does the sling clip securely onto the toggle attachment of the hoist?



Yes > Continue to Section 3 Test Lift

No > Abandon the planned procedure

SECTION TWO – LOOP SYSTEM

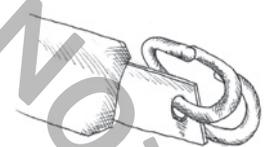
- 1** Does the sling you are intending to use have a loop system?



Yes > Go to question 2

No > Go to Section 1 Clip attachment

- 2** Does the hoist you intend to use have an attachment for loops?



Yes > Go to question 3

No > Abandon the planned procedure

- 3** Do the loops fit securely onto the spreader bar attachment?



Yes > Continue to Section 3 Test Lift

No > Abandon the planned procedure

SECTION THREE – TEST LIFT

When the sling is correctly and safely secured to the hoist, GENTLY raise the person from the surface they are on, i.e. bed, chair, floor, five centimetres ONLY in order to assess the person's position in the sling. Please circle your decisions below.

Does the sling fully support the person?

Yes. Continue

No. Lower the person and reposition the sling. Repeat test lift. If No, abandon planned procedure.

Does the spreader bar configuration allow the person to be lifted comfortably?

Yes. Continue

No. Abandon planned procedure.

Is there sufficient head clearance?

Yes. Continue

No. Abandon planned procedure.

Is there a sufficient minimum/maximum lifting range to carry out the handling activities required?

Yes. Continue

No. Abandon planned procedure.

During the test lift, did the hoist remain stable?

Yes. Continue

No. Abandon planned procedure.

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COMPATIBILITY RECORD SHEET

You could record your compatibility test and hoisting plan on this table below and put this in the person's file.

Full name:

Date of birth:

NHS number:

Hoist manufacturer	Hoist type Mobile, gantry, tracking	Name of hoist	Safe working load (SWL)	Serial number

Sling manufacturer	Sling style	Sling size	Unique reference no.	Loop or clips	Leg configuration	If loops – record which loop

I confirm that I have carried out a compatibility assessment of the hoist and sling as detailed.

Full name (please print):

Job title:

Signature:

Date:

REFERENCES

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