

Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety Unit

OHS ALERT

SYNTHETIC SOFT SLINGS

The CFMEU OHS Unit is concerned about the continuing misuse of synthetic slings. They have been the cause of numerous accidents, and builders and subcontractors need to reduce their use.

Synthetic slings are only to be used in limited circumstances and following stringent safety procedures.

Soft slings are a last resort. You must explore and exhaust all other slinging options before you consider soft slings.

A SWMS must be done stating there is no other way to sling the load.



INSPECTION

Synthetic slings must be inspected before each use. They must also be inspected at least once every three months.

If a sling is subject to severe conditions the inspections should be more frequent. Send each sling for a proof load test at least every 3 months.

LOOK FOR:

- Any external wear such as abrasion or cuts and contusions
- Internal wear, which is often indicated by a thickening of the sling or the presence of grit and dirt
- Damage to any protective coating of the sling
- Damage caused by high temperatures, sunlight or chemicals (indicated by discolouration)
- Damage to the label or stitching
- Damage to the eyes or any terminal attachments or end fittings
- Where the sling is covered by a sleeve, the sleeve must cover the sling for the full length, from eye to eye.

DISCARD A SYNTHETIC SLING IF:

- The label has been removed or destroyed
- There is any damage to the sleeve or protective coating

- A nylon sling comes into contact with acid
- A polyester sling comes into contact with alkaline substances
- A polypropylene sling comes into contact with an organic solvent such as paint, coal tar or paint stripper
- There are any visible cuts on the sling.

NB. A nylon sling will lose more than 10% of its strength when it is wet.

After six months continuous exposure to sunlight, a sling should be sent for testing.

SYNTHETIC SLINGS MUST BE STORED:

- in a clean, dry, well ventilated place
- away from the ground or floor
- away from direct sunlight, ultra-violet light and fluorescent lights
- away from extremes of heat
- away from sources of ignition
- away from atmospheric or liquid chemicals
- away from the possibility of mechanical damage.

The working life of synthetic slings will be shortened if exposed to any of the above.

Contact the CFMEU Safety Unit if you have any concerns: 03 9341 3444

Safety is union business.
Stand Up. Speak Out. Come Home.