

MARCH 2023

# CFMEU OHS ALERT PRE-SLUNG LOADS

## PRE-SLUNG LOADS - ARE WE WAITING FOR A FATALITY TO OCCUR...?

It would appear (at least from the photographic evidence below) that pre-slung loads are making an unadulterated, uncontrolled and a most unwelcome foray back into our industry.

It is a fundamental task of all doggies and crane crew members to thoroughly and comprehensively inspect all lifting gear prior to use. This cannot be achieved with pre-slung loads – it is simply not possible and is especially true when the loads are pre-slung with synthetic soft webbing slings, as seen in the picture below.

Whilst there has never been a complete and total ban on the use of synthetic soft webbing slings, especially since the tragic fatality that occurred in South Australia back in 2010, using these slings has been very restricted and has only been “approved” once a thorough and exhaustive process (under a comprehensive Hazard Identification regime and a

forensically detailed SWMS) has been undertaken to prove that there was/is no other means but to use them for the task in question. However, even after all these requirements have been met, their use remains heavily restricted under specific guidelines and requirements – many of which have been adopted and are specified under various Australian Standards and Industry Agreed Work Practices.



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Such requirements and agreed work practices include but are not limited to:

- Soft slings only to be used as a last resort;
- A review of the project/sites' Lifting Gear Register;
- A review of the relevant paperwork for each individual sling being proposed for use;
- A thorough and clinical inspection of the entire sling before each use to identify:
  1. "External Wear" (e.g. abrasions, cuts, contusions) and
  2. "Internal Wear" (e.g. a thickening of the sling, presence of grit and/or dirt);
- Identify any damage caused by temperature, sunlight, chemicals or water.
- They should NOT be used on materials/equipment that have any potential sharp/cutting edges.

It is also a requirement that synthetic soft webbing slings need to be stored:

- In a clean, dry, well ventilated space;
- Away from the ground or floor;
- Away from direct sunlight, ultraviolet light and fluorescent light;
- Away from atmospheric or liquid chemicals.

Another important, but often overlooked fact about synthetic slings, is that a nylon sling will lose more than 10% of its strength (and hence reduce its lifting capacity) when it is wet.

Any loads that come to site "pre-slung" with either synthetic, soft webbing slings or any other means of pre-slinging, will not be accepted on site unless our doggies/riggers can safely inspect and "re-sling" the load correctly - using the safest methods and equipment as per the requirements of their high risk licence.

However, to prevent any future negative reoccurrence and saturation of our industry with pre-slung loads (slings or chains), any pre-slung loads that come to site after the 17th April, 2023, WILL NOT BE UNLOADED AND WILL BE TURNED AWAY.

Don't get caught out accepting pre-slung loads. Follow the above requirements and demand the highest levels of health and safety protection – if you're in any doubt, contact the CFMEU for advice and directions.



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