

ALERT

Webbing Slings

The tragic death of a worker on the Adelaide desalination plant is a sad reminder of the inherent dangers of synthetic slings. The accident occurred when a synthetic failed.

Any use of synthetic slings must be part of a Safe Work Method Statement that takes into account possible hazards and potential damage to the sling.

The NSW 'Guide For Rigging' includes this chapter on synthetic slings:

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 12 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 send a sling in 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.

For more information contact your site Safety Delegate or local CFMEU Organiser.

Authorised by Lindsay Fraser, Assistant Divisional Secretary responsible for OH&S, CFMEU Construction & General.