

Rigging Basics

The use of slings to handle materials on the job is often a necessary and a regular part of the job . Unfortunately, improper rigging practices often result in accidents that hurt and even kill people. Fortunately, if you follow some basic safety precautions, you can drastically minimize the risk of an accident from occurring.

Always inspect slings before each use for damage. You should be looking for pulls, snags, holes, burns, abrasions from dragging, corrosion, etc. If you observe any of these noticeable irregularities, alert your supervisor and remove the sling from service.

It's imperative to ensure that slings are hitched in a manner that provides you full control of the load. You should keep any sharp edges in contact with slings padded. The pads should be made with material strong enough to protect the sling from breaking.

Never attempt to shorten or adjust a sling unless the method is approved by the manufacturer or a qualified person. You should also never shorten or lengthen a sling by knotting or twisting it. Kinking should also be avoided. These actions can damage and weaken slings.

Whenever you are lifting a sling, with or without a load, be sure that a co-worker is watching and in constant communication with you to help steer clear of possible snags. Do not rest loads on the sling. When you are moving the sling, do not pull from under a load when the load is resting on the sling. You should also never drag slings on the floor or over abrasive surfaces that could cause damage.

If you are using a basket hitch, make sure that the load is balanced to prevent any slippage from occurring. You should also ensure that the legs of the sling contain or support the load from the sides, above the center of gravity so that the load always remains under control.

If you are using a choker hitch, make sure that the choke point is only on the sling body. It is never safe for you to have the choke point on a splice or fitting. Slings should not be constricted, bunched, or pinched by the load, hook, or any fitting. Keep the load centered in the base of the hook to prevent point loading on the hook unless the hook is designed for point loading.

