



Toolbox Talk & Safety Alert

Rigging and Suspended Loads

Why This Matters

Rigging and lifting operations are high-risk activities. When loads are not properly rigged or suspended using approved methods and equipment, serious injuries or fatalities can occur. This talk highlights a recent incident and reviews key OSHA requirements and best practices to help prevent similar events.

Real Incident Example – What Happened?

At the HiLine facility, a crew suspended a heavy component using a nylon pallet strap. The strap, which was not rated for lifting or suspending loads, failed and caused the component to fall and strike a worker. The crew was unaware that the pallet strap was not appropriate for this use.

With regular training that builds on what we already know, we can strengthen our culture of hazard recognition and support better decision-making during task planning and execution.

Relevant IWS Procedures and OSHA Regulations

- **29 CFR 1910.184(c)(1) – Slings: Safe Use**
 - Slings must have permanent and legible identification markings showing rated capacity and type of hitch.
 - *This applies because the strap used had no markings and was not rated for lifting or suspension.*
- **29 CFR 1926.251(a)(1) – Rigging Equipment for Material Handling**
 - Rigging equipment must be inspected before each use and during use as necessary to ensure it remains safe.
 - *This applies because the nylon pallet strap was not inspected or verified as suitable for suspending a load.*

Safe Rigging and Lifting Practices

- Only use rigging that is rated and approved for lifting and suspending loads.
- Never use nylon pallet straps, tie-downs, or non-rated materials to support suspended loads.
- Inspect all rigging before use – check for cuts, fraying, bent hardware, or missing capacity labels.
- Verify the working load limit (WLL) of all equipment and do not exceed it.
- Ensure workers remain clear of the load's path and never stand under a suspended load.
- Use taglines where necessary to guide and stabilize the load.
- Perform a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) or Task Hazard Analysis (THA) before starting.
- Use a secondary means of securement for suspended loads when stability is required.

Discussion Points for Your Crew

- What are the risks if we shortcut rigging procedures?
- How do we verify a sling or strap is approved for a suspended load?
- When should we stop and re-evaluate a lift plan?

Takeaway Message

Rigging is not the place to cut corners. If something doesn't feel right or look right, stop and speak up. Use only approved equipment for lifting and suspending loads, and always take time to inspect and plan. Doing it right the first time prevents injuries, equipment damage, and downtime.