

Patient handling – Portable ceiling hoists

Information for employers about the safe use of ceiling hoists.

August 2013

Background

There have been several incidents where ceiling hoists, using latching hooks and wands or just wands (also known as extension arms), failed when transferring patients, causing serious injuries.

Hoists systems may fail if:

- hoist hooks do not close properly
- hoist hooks have been incorrectly attached to the wand. This may result in the hook latch being damaged, causing the connection point to open or disconnect
- wands that feature an open hook have been incorrectly placed on the ceiling track eyelet, resulting in the wand slipping out of the eyelet while a person is being hoisted.



Figure 1: Patient handling ceiling hoist that uses a latching hook and wand system.

Control measures

As an employer, you must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons including patients and employees, are not exposed to risks to their health or safety.

This includes providing or maintaining plant (eg a patient handling ceiling hoist) that is safe and without risks to health.

You should:

- Consider installing a hoist that does not rely on latching hooks and/or wands, and features load rated hoisting components that eliminate or minimise the likelihood of incorrect installation or use. Where practicable, use permanently installed hoists.

If using portable hoists:

- ensure hoisting components between the hoist and ceiling rail lock together during engagement, and the components provide operators with confirmation of secure engagement.
- Ensure load ratings are identified and marked on hoist suspension components, and records of these ratings are retained at the workplace.
- Provide information and training to employees on how to properly check, connect and use hoists. Inspection acceptance and rejection criteria should be covered in this training.
- Require employees to undertake pre-operation and post connection checks when using hoists.
- Arrange regular inspection, testing and maintenance of hoists. It may be necessary to engage a third-party service provider who has expertise in hoist inspection and maintenance.
- Withdraw and dispose of damaged, worn or faulty hoist components. If inspection records (including inspection tags) for hoist components cannot be located or have become illegible, withdraw the relevant components from service. Inspect and verify these components are safe for ongoing use or dispose of them. Hoist components have a design life (check with manufacturer/supplier for design life information) and once that period is exceeded, components may be unsafe and should not be used.



Figure 2: Example of a permanent hoist that does not use wands and hooks. There are also lifting modules with a quick-release system that allows the relocation of the lifting module to another location.

Further information

For more information about hoist and sling maintenance and testing requirements see:

- AS 1418.1: *Cranes, hoists and winches - General requirements*
- AS 1418.2: *Cranes (including hoists and winches) - Serial hoists and winches*
- AS 2550.1: *Cranes, hoists and winches - Safe use - General requirements*
- AS/NZS ISO 10535: *Hoists for the transfer of disabled persons - Requirements and test methods.*

Contact Details

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