



# OHS alert!

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## Synthetic soft Slings

The CFMEU OHS Unit is concerned about the continuing misuse of synthetic slings. They have been the cause of numerous accidents, and builders and sub-contractors need to reduce their use.

Synthetic slings are only to be used in limited circumstances and following stringent safety procedures.

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. There should also be a lifting gear register and relevant paperwork for each sling.

### 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, a sling should be sent 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.



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