Hoist Safety Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Whether you’re working on a construction site, in a warehouse, or in a manufacturing plant, hoists are often part of the job. These machines help lift and move heavy materials that would be impossible – or extremely dangerous – to move by hand. But here’s the thing: when hoists aren’t used properly, things can go wrong in an instant.

A dropped load can crush equipment, injure or kill a worker, or even bring an entire project to a halt. All it takes is one shortcut – like skipping an inspection, overloading the hoist, or using damaged rigging – and someone could pay the price with their life. Even near-misses are a wake-up call. They mean something in the process isn’t safe, and next time, it might not be a close call.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

When hoists are used without proper safety precautions, a lot can go wrong – and quickly.

Dropped Loads – This is the most obvious and most dangerous risk. If a hoist is overloaded, improperly rigged, or the load is unbalanced, it can fall. A falling load can crush anyone in its path and cause severe injury or death. Even smaller loads can be fatal when dropped from a height.

Mechanical Failures – Hoists are machines – and like all machines, they wear down over time. If gears, brakes, chains, or slings are not inspected and maintained regularly, they can fail. Worn-out components might not show obvious signs until they suddenly give out under pressure.

Improper Use – Not all hoists are designed for every job. Using the wrong type of hoist, exceeding the rated load capacity, or lifting at an angle instead of vertically can overload the equipment and cause tipping or failure.

Electrical Hazards – With electric hoists, there’s also the danger of electrical shock or fire. Frayed power cords, wet environments, or damaged control switches can all pose a risk. If the system shorts out while lifting a load, the hoist can stop suddenly or even drop it.

Pinch Points and Entanglement – Chains, slings, and hooks create pinch points that can trap hands, fingers, or clothing. Loose clothing, jewelry, or hair can get caught in moving parts, leading to serious injuries if the hoist is not stopped in time.

Common Causes of Hoist-Related Incidents

- Overloading the hoist beyond its rated capacity
- Failing to inspect rigging and hoist components before use
- Lifting at an angle instead of straight up and down
- Using damaged or worn-out slings, hooks, or chains
- Bypassing controls or using unauthorized rigging methods

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Knowing the dangers of hoist operation is important, but taking the right safety steps is what really keeps everyone safe on the job. Here’s how to protect yourself and your coworkers by addressing each major risk.

Prevent Dropped Loads

One of the biggest dangers is a dropped load, which can cause serious injury or death. To prevent this, always check the hoist’s load rating and never exceed it. Rig loads properly and make sure they are balanced before lifting. It’s essential to lift loads vertically—never at an angle or with side loading. Using only approved slings, hooks, and rigging hardware designed for the specific load also reduces the risk of failure.

Avoid Mechanical Failures

Hoists are machines that need regular care to operate safely. Mechanical failures happen when worn or damaged parts go unnoticed. To avoid this:

- Inspect chains, hooks, brakes, and other components before each use.
- Report and tag out any damaged or worn equipment immediately.
- Follow the manufacturer’s recommended maintenance schedule.
- Listen for unusual noises or jerking movements during operation, and stop using the hoist if you notice them.

Manage Electrical Hazards

Electric hoists come with their own risks. To stay safe:

- Check electrical cords and control switches for damage before each use.
- Avoid using electric hoists in wet or unsafe environments unless properly protected.
- Report any electrical issues or malfunctions immediately.
- Do not use hoists with frayed cords or damaged controls.

Prevent Pinch Points and Entanglement

Moving hoist parts create pinch points that can injure hands or catch clothing. To avoid these hazards:

- Keep hands, fingers, and loose clothing away from chains, hooks, and moving

parts.
- Avoid wearing jewelry, loose clothing, or having long hair untied around hoists.
- Stop the hoist immediately if anything becomes trapped or tangled.

Final Tip: Always stay alert and focused when working with or near hoists. A moment’s distraction can lead to a dangerous accident. When in doubt, stop the job and ask for help always comes first.

FINAL WORD

Hoist safety depends on everyone’s attention and care. Always follow proper procedures, inspect equipment, and speak up about hazards. Doing so helps prevent accidents and ensures everyone goes home safe each day.