Rigging For a Safe Lift



WHAT’S AT STAKE?

If you work around cranes, slings and rigging, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the tools and equipment and how to use them safely.

A competent rigger will tell you it’s essential to know your lift—never second-guess the equipment.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Every lift can be divided into three main components:

1. the lifting device
2. the hitch
3. the load weight

The lifting device can be a crawler or truck crane, a pedestal-mounted crane or an overhead crane. Its capabilities should be clearly understood. For example, will it lift high enough? And what is its horizontal reach?

The condition of the lift is also important. When was it last inspected?

Once you determine the total weight to be moved, and how far it must go, the hitching method can be prepared.

The weight of the load must be within the rated capacity of any rigging, including slings, hooks and shackles.

Make sure the sling you select is the type best suited to handle the load. Check the load rating. It should also have proper attachments such as hooks and rings. Also be aware when slings should be maintained or removed from service.

Always inspect the sling before using it. Run your hands along the fabric and feel for tears, holes, snags and frayed areas. Most slings are made with a red warning string in the material; this will show through if the sling is heavily worn.

Defective slings should be removed from service immediately—preferably cut into

pieces and discarded.

Here are more safety tips:

- Always attach the sling to the load first and then attach it to the hook.
- Check everything before attempting a lift. Put a light strain on the rigging and ensure that blocking, load protection and all safety devices are in place.
- Ensure the load is balanced and free of any restraints.
- Make sure no one is standing near suspended loads or loads about to be lifted.
- Do not place hands or fingers between the sling and load while the sling is being tightened.
- Let the lifting device and rigging do the job. Don’t use brute strength to prevent swinging or movement.
- Use a tagline or tether to control any movement.
- After the lift is completed, check the sling for any damage.

FINAL WORD

Always be familiar with the equipment you are using and never second-guess anything when it comes to fall protection.