

What Do I Do With It?

How to permanently dispose of rigging gear removed from service

With no clear-cut, industry-wide rules on retiring or destroying damaged rigging hardware and slings, permanent disposal is left up to the owner or end user.



If the owner of damaged or worn-out slings and rigging hardware does not destroy or retire these products, and an unexpected user gets hurt, can the company be liable for damages? Neither OSHA, nor ANSI, the Web Sling & Tie Down Association (WSTDA), the Association of Wire Rope Fabricators (AWRF), or any other crane and rigging group or professional organization provides clear direction on what to do with slings and rigging gear that must be removed from service. This responsibility is left up to the user's imagination.

Many government projects require the destruction of damaged rigging gear. Some companies simply throw the gear into the scrap heap or dumpster. Then there are some companies that believe that it is good management-labor relations to give their employees the removed sling or rigging gear for use on a farm, at home, or for towing disabled off-road vehicles.

Mike Riggs is the president of Rigging Institute LLC and the author of "The Complete Rigger's Reference Handbook." Contact him at mriggs@rigginginstitute.com. David Johnson is a partner at SmithAmundsen LLC. He has presented webinars and seminars and authored articles on OSHA's crane regulations and ASME's B.30 standards. Contact him at djohnson@salawus.com.

Manufacturers of slings and rigging hardware provide warnings and instructions on when to remove worn-out or damaged rigging gear from service to protect the end users from getting injured in the event of equipment failure. Even when warnings and instructions are not followed by the user, manufacturers have still been faulted over resulting injuries and damages. Can this happen to a company that does not require worn-out or damaged slings and rigging hardware to be destroyed or made inoperable?



Slings that are removed from service should be clearly marked as worn-out so they are not accidentally used.

Who is responsible?

Current practice demonstrates that if a company uses slings and rigging hardware that should be removed from service, and personal injury or property damage results, the company may be liable for damages. On the other hand, if the same sling or piece of rigging hardware is removed from service, and an employee or stranger uses it, and the result is personal or third-party injuries or property damage, liability is much less certain.

Under product liability law, it appears that manufacturers would have no liability under

such circumstances. Likewise, under negligence law, end users may escape liability based on the issues of duty and causation. The answers to these questions are not clear, and are further complicated by jurisdictional and factual circumstances.

The better practice for users with worn-out or damaged slings and rigging equipment is to employ safe practices in removing and discarding the tools. Here are some common methods applied to prevent both use of damaged gear and injury to any unexpected user.

Wire Rope Slings: When a wire rope sling is removed from service, the eyes can be cut. This practice prevents slings or hitches from being formed from any hardware that may be used. However, it is best to go one step further. You can cut the body of the sling into smaller pieces to prevent the fabrication of a new eye at the end of a discarded rope that is not allowed to be used to fabricate wire rope slings as per ASME B30.9-2.2.1(a). Most metal recycling facilities request the rope be cut into 3-ft. sections or less, because metal is often moved by magnets in the scrap yard and the short lengths make it easier to handle the wire rope.

CM

WHAT YOU WANT. WHEN YOU NEED IT. GUARANTEED.

Your project shouldn't be delayed because you can't get the rigging equipment you need. At Columbus McKinnon, we're committed to ship our most popular chain and forged attachment products in days, not weeks — **that's our In-Stock Guarantee.** This is not a promotion. It's a new way of doing business, and it's something our competition can not offer. Contact your distributor to take advantage of this guarantee and to get the rigging products you need when you need them.

IN-STOCK GUARANTEE
SHIPS IN 3 DAYS OR LESS

CHOOSE FROM MORE THAN **135** IN-STOCK GUARANTEE PRODUCTS

CM
COLUMBUS MCKINNON CORPORATION

(800) 888.0985 • (716) 689.5400 • www.cmworks.com

Alloy Chain Slings: Much like wire rope slings, damaged lengths of chain can be made into two chains or makeshift tie-downs, or even refitted with hardware to be used as a sling. Remember, in disposal, shorter lengths make it easier to handle in the scrap yard.

Synthetic Web Slings: Just cutting the eyes out of a web sling would seem like a sufficient step, as it is impossible to cut the excess material out and attach new hardware or form an eye by tying a knot in the sling. In one observed case, however, an ingenious company sent old web slings to a shoe shop. Here new eyes were sewn in and canvas patches were sewn over cuts to prevent the sling from ripping further at the cut. Of course, this would only happen if your company is subject to low bid.

All kidding aside, a rigger can reuse cut-up webbing as softeners to prevent abrasion and snagging that could damage replacement slings. This ensures the sling lasts much longer and keeps the rigging safer—which is the bottom line.

Synthetic Roundslings: These slings are difficult to reuse once they are cut in two,



A rigger can reuse cut-up webbing as softeners to prevent abrasion and snagging of replacement slings. This gives the sling longer life, and keeps the rigging safe.

unless someone enjoys tying knots. Normally, severing one area of the sling will prevent any future use.

Rigging Hardware: As with slings, it is best to destroy damaged hardware so that it cannot be used again for any purpose. This includes cutting master links, shackles, eyebolts, and hooks in such a manner that there is no possibility of use in the future.

Rigging shops and companies that employ recycling of rigging gear and hardware have secured disposal. This process is more efficient than cutting up the hardware, and it prevents the removal of damaged goods. Slings that are removed from service should be clearly identified so they are not accidentally used. Remember, if it's not good enough for work, it's not good enough for home. ■



Full Inspection Round Sling Technology



NEW DISTRIBUTORS

Super Slings Inc.
Nisku, Alberta



Western Sling & Supply Co.
Sedalia, Colorado & Casper, Wyoming

Arizona Wire Rope
Phoenix, AZ



The Rigging Box
Lorton, VA

Sharrow Lifting Products
New Brighton, MN



Mid-America Rigging
Oklahoma City, OK

For more information visit us at www.firstsling.com