

02-02 Synthetic Web Slings

Pacific Maritime Association

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Synthetic Web Slings

INFORMATION

Recently, a PMA member stevedoring company was cited by the U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for using damaged synthetic web slings. The Operation involved discharging imported cargo, which was "pre-slung" with the web slings. OSHA found that approximately 20% of the slings inspected were damaged and should have been removed from service.

The Region X OSHA Administrator in Seattle has asked PMA to "alert steamship companies of their obligation to provide equipment that meets OSHA requirements" and reinforce the requirements for the inspection, removal or repair of synthetic web slings. The requirements for periodic tests, examinations, and inspections of a vessel's "loose gear" are contained in 29 CFR 1919 Subpart D and E. Regulations at 49 CFR 1918.51(b) require employers to inspect a vessel's cargo gear including web slings before each use.

OSHA's regulations at 29 CFR 1918.62(g) require synthetic web slings to be removed from service if they exhibit any of the following defects:

- Acid or Caustic burns
- Melting or charring of any part of the sling surface
- Snags punctures tears or cuts
- Broken or worn stitches
- Distortion or damage to fittings
- Display of visible warning threads or markers designed to indicate excessive wear or damage

Defective web slings are not to be returned to service unless repaired by a sling manufacturer (or similar entity) and proof tested to twice the rated capacity.

ACTION

Employers should take note and ensure that all personnel are fully aware of the OSHA requirements for the examination and removal of synthetic web slings from service. Employers should also ensure that non-member steamship operators calling at their terminals are advised of the OSHA regulations. Compliance with these requirements will prevent unnecessary hazards and disruptions on pre-slung web sling operations. Non-compliance could result in not being able to use the ship-supplied slings for cargo discharge. 49 CFR 1918.11, 51(b), 62(g) and 1919. Subpart D and E (extracted) are attached for reference.

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