ICHCA International Limited

INTERNATIONAL SAFETY PANEL

GENERAL SERIES #4

Organisation of Gear Stores

by

Geoff Holden
and
Tom Sims

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This publication is one of a series developed by the International Safety Panel ("Safety Panel") of ICHCA International Limited ("ICHCA"). The series is designed to inform those involved in the cargo-handling field of various practical health and safety issues. ICHCA aims to encourage port safety, the reduction of accidents in port work and the protection of port workers' health.

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ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This publication has been written by Geoff Holden, Chief Executive of the Lifting Equipment Engineers Association (LEEA) and Tom Sims and is a joint publication with LEEA.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Geoff Holden
Chief Executive
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After completing a degree in Metallurgy in Sheffield Geoff joined Bridon Wire in 1976 as a development metallurgist developing a range of wire products. After a time with Liftex a subsidiary company carrying out the statutory inspection of lifting gear he returned to Bridon Ropes as a development engineer involved in the development of the Dyform® range of crane rope products.

Following a spell managing a number of Bridon sales and distribution businesses across the UK during the 1980s during the 1990s he was part of the senior management team involved in the creation and development of the Bridon distribution business which became the international wire rope and lifting equipment distributor Certex.

Leaving Bridon in 2002 to join Spanset he was responsible for sales of their range of lifting and lashing products eventually becoming the sales manager for the Spanset range of height safety products.

Joining the Lifting Equipment Engineers Association in 2008 he is now responsible for the international development of the association and for the provision of the association's services to over 450 member companies worldwide. As part of this he is involved in liaison with a number of international trade associations and a member of the International Safety Panel of ICHCA International.

Tom Sims
Tom Sims was an apprentice through to Chief Officer on general cargo trades world-wide with Prince Line from 1949 to 1960. He then became Stevedoring Superintendent with A E Smith Coggings Ltd, Stevedores from 1960 to 1976 responsible for ship management, loading and discharging all cargoes. From 1968 he was Equipment Superintendent responsible for all mechanical and lifting equipment for the Group in London and Tilbury. He became Marine Equipment co-ordinator for Coubro & Scrutton Ltd from 1976 to 1994 dealing with Port Operators, Stevedores and Shipowners on Cranes, Derricks, Lifting Equipment, Container Securing and Ro-Ro Lashing. Since 1994, he has offered a consultancy service on lifting and securing equipment, the designing of lifting equipment and implementation of ISO Standards, EU Standards and Regulations. He is a Foreign Going Master and a chains and ships cargo gear tester and examiner. He assisted in developing chapters 4&5 of the third edition of the ILO Code of Practice on Health and Safety in Ports and was the technical consultant in preparing BP#2 Ships Lifting Plant and in developing PSO pocket cards on safe slinging.

LEEA

Established in 1944, the LEEA campaigns vigorously for higher standards of safety within the lifting industry. In addition to providing members with training and expert technical advice, the association works closely with organisations such as the Health and Safety Executive in the preparation of regulations and British, European and International standards. Member companies include those involved in the design, manufacture, hire, repair, refurbishment, test, examination, verification and use of lifting equipment. Applicants are subject to an initial technical audit before full membership is granted,

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and then to a continuing programme of assessments. Further details on the activities of the LEEA and a full list of members can be found at: www.leeaint.com

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Published: June 2011

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ICHCA International Safety Panel General Series #4
ISBN Number: 978-1-85330-032-5

ORGANISATION OF GEAR STORES

1. Introduction

1.1 No matter what type of lifting appliance is used, virtually every lifting operation requires additional equipment to connect the load to the lifting appliance. The general term used for this equipment is Loose Gear. The suitability and condition of the loose gear is of vital importance to the overall safety of lifting operations. However many organisations fail to recognise the dangers of leaving equipment in poor storage, exposed to the elements and rarely examined or inspected.

1.2 This pamphlet deals with the manufacture, testing, thorough examination, inspection and recording of the relative information, the methods of storage, ambient conditions and the segregation of loose gear.

1.3 Whether the number of items of loose gear held is small or very large, the same general approach should be made to its care and maintenance and the principles of this pamphlet should be applied.

2. Requirements.

2.1 In accordance with ILO Convention 152 1979 and ILO Code of Practice Safety and Health in Ports 2005 all loose gear used in ports should be:

- of good design and construction, of adequate strength for its intended use and free from patent defect;
- made to a recognized international or national standard;
- maintained in good repair and working order;
- tested and thoroughly examined by a competent person before being taken into use;
- thoroughly examined by a competent person at least once in every 12 months;
- inspected regularly before use and by a responsible person during use;
- clearly marked with its SWL and alphanumeric identification mark.

2.2 All loose gear should have:

- a certificate of test and thorough examination before being taken into service and;
- a certificate of thorough examination issued in the last 12 months or at shorter intervals prescribed by the competent authority or administration or the competent person carrying out the examination.

2.3 The authenticated records (certificates) for the tests, thorough examinations and inspections should be kept in a form prescribed by the competent authority, account being taken of the models recommended by the International Labour Office.

2.4 These documents should be kept for five years. Initial Certificates should be kept for the life of the equipment.

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2.5 All testing should be carried out in accordance with Appendix D of the ILO Code of Practice Health and Safety in Ports.

3. Examinations, Inspections and Marking

3.1 Loose Gear

3.11 Loose Gear covers any gear by means of which a load can be attached to a lifting appliance but does not form an integral part of the appliance or load.

3.2 Competent Person

3.2.1 Competent Persons should have such appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience of the loose gear to be thoroughly examined as will enable them to detect defects or weaknesses and to assess their importance in relation to the safety and continued use of the loose gear.

3.3 Responsible Person

3.3.1 A Responsible Person means a person appointed by the employer or the owner of the gear, as the case may be, to be responsible for the performance of a duty or duties and has sufficient knowledge and experience and the requisite authority for the proper performance of the duty or duties.

3.4 Thorough Examinations

3.4.1 Loose Gear should be thoroughly examined by a competent person, in accordance with Appendix C of the ILO Code of Practice Health and Safety in Ports, at least once every 12 months, or at such intervals as may be prescribed by the competent authority or competent person, and after any repairs or modifications. These examinations should include hammer tests, removal of paint to expose the metal underneath, ultrasonic examination, radiographic examination and the dismantling of concealed components where appropriate.

3.4.2 The results of tests and examinations should be recorded.

3.4.3 After the completion of the thorough examination, the competent person should prepare a report which:

- clearly identifies the item examined, the date of the thorough examination, its safe working load(s) and any defects found;
- specifies any parts to be repaired of replaced;
- includes a statement that the item is, or is not, safe for continued use;
- gives the date by which the next thorough examination of loose gear should be carried out;
- gives the name and qualifications of the competent person;
- includes any additional items required by national legislation.

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3.4.4 Such records only provide evidence of the safe condition of loose gear at the time of examination.

3.4.5 Records may be kept in electronic form, provided that the system includes a means of making them available and of verifying the record.

3.5 **In Service Inspections**

3.5.1 In service inspection is a visual inspection by a Responsible Person carried out to determine whether, in so far as can be ascertained in such manor, the equipment is safe for continued use.

3.6 **Marking of Gear**

3.6.1 Equipment that has been satisfactorily verified, e.g. proof tested, and has passed the subsequent thorough examination should be marked with:

- The Safe Working Load; and
- An identification mark, alphanumeric, to facilitate periodic inspection and cross reference to other records; and
- Such other marks as are required by the standard being worked to and by legislation.

3.6.2 Marking should be by means of a suitable plate or metal tag permanently attached or by stamping directly to the equipment, preferably in a non load bearing or low stress area. Stamping into a stressed area may be permissible provided that the mechanical properties of the component are not significantly impaired. Where applicable, the position and size of stamping should be as indicated in the relevant standard or the ILO Code of Practice Safety and Health in Ports 2005. Where a plate or tag is used to convey information, it is recommended that the identification mark should also be put directly onto the equipment so that in the event of the plate or tag becoming detached, the identity is not lost and other information can be recovered from the related documentation.

3.6.3 Should any of the required marking become obliterated or illegible, the equipment should be withdrawn from service and referred to a Competent Person for re-marking or, if necessary, for re-verification and remarking.

3.6.4 Where the user wishes to mark the equipment with information that is liable to change (e.g. plant location reference, date of examination etc) it is recommended that a tag is used as the frequent stamping and subsequent obliteration of stamp marks on load bearing components is detrimental and will at best shorten the life of the equipment.

3.6.5 The safe working load of the majority of new equipment will be in metric units of tonnes (t) or kilograms (kg). The generally accepted rule is that safe working loads of less than one tonne are marked in kilograms. Safe working loads of one tonne and above are marked in tonnes to one decimal place, with the exception of 1.25 tonnes where two decimal places are used.

3.6.6 Certain items of loose gear bear a steel grade or quality mark (see 3.6.7). It is important to understand that, as there are various grades, two items may otherwise appear identical whilst in fact their load bearing capacity could be considerably different due to being of different grades.

3.6.7 Steel Quality Grade Marks can be found in Appendix F of the ILO's Code of Practice on Health and Safety in Ports.

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Quality Grade Mark	Grade of Steel	Mean Stress (N/mm²)
L	Mild	300
M	Higher Tensile	400
P	Alloy	500
S	Alloy	630
T	Alloy	800

3.7 **Colour Coding**

3.7.1 Colour coding of equipment is increasingly used as a simple means of identifying equipment which is within its examination period. Following the thorough examination of the equipment within the specified period each item of equipment is marked with a colour code. Signs displaying the current code can be displayed around the site enabling users easily to identify items which are outside their examination period. This removes the need for users to closely examine tags or other labels to determine whether an item is safe to use.

4. **The Store**

4.1 **Ambient Conditions**

4.1.1 The storage should protect the equipment from the elements and accidental damage, prevent unauthorised access and provide a means of segregating or quarantining unserviceable equipment. The storage should be clean, dry and free from contaminates which might damage the equipment.

4.2 **Storage Areas**

4.2.1 Suitable shelving or racks are required. Slings and loose gear such as shackles which are of a size that can be lifted manually are best stored on shelves, racks or in special stillages. Larger slings or heavy items such as lifting beams, crane forks and clamps may require storage frames or special support to ensure they cannot fall over.

4.2.2 It is most important that similar items manufactured from different grades of material are clearly identified and kept strictly separated in the store.

4.3 **Designated Areas**

4.3.1 The storage area should be secure to ensure that the equipment is not withdrawn for use without a record being made. Within the store there should be clearly defined areas where equipment can be segregated according to condition. In each area the equipment should be clearly tagged to indicate its status.

4.3.2 There should be a minimum of three areas:

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- Equipment fit for use;
- Equipment quarantined awaiting thorough examination or repair;
- Equipment quarantined awaiting disposal.

It should not be possible for equipment to be inadvertently moved from one area to another.

5. Issue of Gear for use

5.1 The Role of Store Keepers

5.1.1 Store Keepers should carry out the role of a responsible person and their knowledge and experience should enable them to recognise obvious defects and withdraw items from service to be thoroughly examined by a competent person.

5.1.2 The equipment should only be withdrawn from storage by someone authorised to do so. In any event a record should be made that the equipment has been “logged out”, when and to whom. If having the store permanently manned is not economically viable the store should be locked and control handed to someone who will be available as and when necessary. In these circumstances a gear person should be appointed, on each shift, who is capable of inspecting the equipment they issue and receive. However it is important that there should only one individual per shift or control of the store will be impossible.

5.2 Records of Issue

5.2.1 A record of issue effectively hands control and therefore responsibility to the recipient, who should ensure that the equipment is returned or, if it has gone astray, reports it missing. The record should include details of the equipment, the identification mark, the date and time of issue and should be signed by the recipient.

5.2.2 On a large site it may be useful to record how long the equipment has been issued so in the event of it not being returned on time action can be taken to recover it. If equipment is not returned promptly there is an opportunity for it to be used by others when its examination date may have passed or maybe in an unfit condition or unsuitable for the job being done.

5.2.3 If the site operates a shift system and the equipment remains in use through the change of shift it may be appropriate to have a system recording the handover of the equipment from one shift to the other.

6. Receipt of Gear after use

6.1 Receiving Area

6.1.1 On returning an item to the stores the user should report any problems with it. If the equipment has been damaged then the cost has already been incurred. To minimise the safety risks and avoid future financial losses it is essential that the damage is not covered up. Management should encourage a “no blame” culture to ensure that all damage is reported so that preventative action can be taken.

6.1.2 There should be a designated area where returned equipment is kept until it has been inspected, this should be secure to make sure that the equipment is processed and inspected before being returned to use.

6.2 Cleaning

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6.2.2 facility will be required to clean it and repair it for storage. The materials used for cleaning must not themselves cause problems. The materials used for making lifting gear very greatly and may be susceptible to chemical attack or corrosion and may be affected by heat.

6.3 **Inspection**

6.3.1 There should be an inspection area with good lighting, a suitable work bench to work on and a facility to make records and label equipment. A suitably qualified “responsible person” should be appointed to carry out the inspections.

6.3.2 Each item will need an individual identification mark and if the equipment is obtained without a mark an appropriate facility to stamp or tag will be required.

6.3.3 A record of inspection need only be kept where the inspection discloses a defect.

6.4 **Return to Storage for Further Use**

6.4.1 If the result of the inspection is that the equipment is fit for use the equipment should be returned to the storage area.

6.5 **Quarantined for Thorough Examination or Repair**

6.5.1 Unserviceable equipment should be tagged as such and segregated into a secure quarantine area to ensure it is not returned to use.

6.6 **Quarantined for Disposal**

6.6.1 Equipment which is unserviceable and cannot be repaired or is beyond economic repair should be tagged and quarantined in a secure area to await disposal. As a precaution it may be best to make it impossible to use. This may be as simple as cutting a sling or on more complex items removing a key part or otherwise disabling the equipment.

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