

Safety and health alert

03/98 Use of roundslings - synthetic fibres

Incident

On 26 March 1998 in Port Hedland, a 4.78 tonne valve being lifted into a structure fell 37 metres when a synthetic 6 tonne roundsling separated.

The roundsling was capable of lifting the load but as the valve was manoeuvred into position, the roundsling failed following abrasion by a sharp edge. The valve rebounded down through the structure to the ground missing a number of workers who could easily have been killed.

Factors

The valve was slung at about 50 degrees to manoeuvre the valve down through penetrations in the installed steelwork.

If the system of work had allowed the valve to be installed at an earlier stage, then the valve:

- a. could have been lifted horizontally (an easier lift and well clear of any sharp edges);
- b. would have been less likely to bump on steelwork, which caused the load to oscillate and the roundsling to contact a sharp edge; or
- c. would not have had to be manoeuvred through so much steelwork and risk the synthetic roundsling being cut if sandwiched between the steelwork and the load.

Recommendations

While synthetic roundslings are now in widespread use throughout industry, they must only be used:

- a. in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions;
- b. when there is absolutely no chance of the roundsling bearing on a sharp edge; and
- c. when there is no risk of the roundsling being sandwiched between a fixed object with a sharp edge and the load being suspended.

When using, or intending to use, roundslings, employers and riggers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the requirements of Clause 6, Australian Standard 4497.2-1997 - Roundslings - Synthetic Fibres, Part 2: Care and Use.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

