

# Safety and health alert

## 43/99 Chain slips from chain shortener

### Incident

A mature aged apprentice in Kewdale recently suffered traumatic amputation of the toes on his right foot when a 370Kg steel casting slipped and fell to the ground while being moved with the aid of an overhead travelling crane and chain slings.

The incident occurred when a link of the chain slipped out of a chain shortener being used in conjunction with a 4.4metre two-legged chain sling. As the apprentice attempted to guide the load sideways the links of the chain, that had not been correctly seated in the chain shortener, twisted sideways and upwards out of the claws of the shortener allowing the casting to fall to the ground.

### Factors

1. The use of chain shorteners would not have been necessary if slings of an appropriate length had been available at the workplace.
2. The links of the chain had not been seated correctly in the claws of the chain shortener. This allowed the chain to slip when pressure was applied from the side as the apprentice attempted to guide the load.
3. Insufficient training and supervision of an apprentice who was required (or allowed) to conduct slinging operations that required the exercise of judgement.

### Recommendations

1. The use of appropriate slings and slinging techniques is essential at all times when moving loads that require the exercise of judgement.
2. The risks associated with the use of chain shorteners should be eliminated by using chains or slings of an appropriate length wherever possible.
3. The provision of appropriate training and supervision for employees required to use lifting equipment, in particular where judgement is required to be exercised.

### Further Information

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

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