

### Safe Patient Handling Equipment – Sling Label Information

Saskatchewan's *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*, Regulation 31-4, states that an employer shall ensure a preventative maintenance program is implemented when safe patient handling equipment is required.

#### **Would that include slings???**

Part of preventative maintenance program is to ensure that the sling's label information is legible (i.e. readable). The label provides important information, such as the sling size, weight capacity, laundering instructions, and it is critical information for the safety of the worker and the client.

When selecting a sling for a client moving task, workers need to ensure they are selecting the appropriate sling size and weight capacity based on the client assessment. To maintain the sling's integrity (i.e. reliability) laundering is to be performed according to manufacturer guidelines.

#### **I have a sling and the label is not readable – Now What???**

When a sling label is identified as not being legible, the equipment vendor for that sling may have guidelines in place for marking/labelling their specific slings. The guidelines from the vendor should be provided in writing and should step out the specific process so that any warranty is not jeopardized.

Until the solution is determined for unreadable label information, removing the sling from use is the safest procedure. This will ensure that the sling is not used inappropriately.

Regulation 14-5 states that an employer shall ensure that a sling is clearly labelled to indicate the sling's maximum load or the sling's maximum load is made readily available to workers; and that the sling is not used if it has been or may be damaged.

#### **I have another similar sling – or is it???**

Relying on a sling colour, coloured straps or visual comparison with another sling is not the safest method of determining a sling size, weight capacity or other important information. Errors in judgment could occur and this could increase the risk of injury to a worker and the client.

#### **Where is that instruction manual???**

Equipment and sling user instruction manuals need to be available to workers. The manual may have come with the equipment (e.g., paper version, on CD); vendors may also make the manual available on their website. The information in the manual is to be reviewed and followed. Employees are to receive training on equipment, including slings.

### Safety Talk Discussion

**Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!**