

Safe Patient Handling and Mobility Toolkit – Tool 5b

To learn more about using this tool, refer to the Section 5 in the Safe Patient Handling and Mobility: A Toolkit for Program Development 2025 at: <https://www.nvha.net/safe-patient-handling-and-mobility-toolkit/>

Sling Safety Checklist for Users

This checklist assists health care workers in ensuring safe use and compatibility of patient lifts, hanger bars, and slings. It does not replace manufacturer instructions or facility policies regarding lift and sling combinations or their correct use.

References

Gibson C. Jan 2015. Choosing a sling for your hoist National Bank exchange. Leaflet 003. Jan 15.

Health and Safety Executive (2012). Getting to grips with hoisting people. Health Services Information Sheet No. 3 (2012) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/hsis3.pdf>

International Organization for Standardization. ISO 10535:2021. Assistive products – Hoists for the transfer of persons – Requirements and test methods. <https://www.iso.org/standard/72711.html>

Smith, J., Simpson, P., & Fray, M.(Eds) (2023). HOP7: The guide to handling of people. Person-centered practice National Back Pain Association.

The American Association for Safe Patient Handling and Movement. Healthcare Recipient Sling and Hanger Bar Compatibility Guidelines. First published April 2016. <https://asphm.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/AASPHM-Sling-Hanger-Bar-Guidelines-2016.pdf>

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Sling and Hanger Bar Inspection Checklist for Healthcare Workers

Never use defective or damaged sling and/or hanger bar. Identify e.g., visibly tag, as damaged or defective, and immediately remove from service per your organization's policy

You should receive competency-based training before using Safe Patient Handling and Mobility (SPHM) equipment and slings, and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using SPHM equipment and slings

Healthcare workers should check for the following <u>each time</u> they use a sling:	Yes	If No*
1. The Sling to be used:		
a. Is documented on the patient's care plan, and on the nursing assistant assignment, and/or communication hand-off tool, e.g., <i>the type and size of sling and any special instructions for use.</i>		
b. Is compatible with the hanger bar connection points e.g., loops or clips		
c. Is suitable for the patient, in terms of:		
i. Clinical needs and precautions, and medical equipment attached		
ii. Size - e.g., weight, height, torso and hip width		
iii. Style - suitable for the SPHM task to be performed		
iv. Material - for comfort on skin (e.g., wounds; irritation, sensory deficits)		
d. Has a weight capacity/load that exceeds the patient's body weight. Note: the <i>maximum</i> load capacity of a sling, lift or hanger bar may differ; the patient's weight must not exceed the <i>capacity</i> of the sling, lift or hanger bar with the lowest weight capacity. Weight capacity should be easily visibly on the motor and on the hanger bar (if detachable) and on the sling label.		
e. Is clean		
f. Has not been laundered, if the sling is designed for single use/is disposable, or wipeable only		
g. Has a sling manufacturer's label		
h. The sling label is easy to read (e.g., is not faded or damaged)		
i. The body of the sling has:		
i. Stitching that is intact – there are no signs of fraying or loose stitching especially where the straps/loops are attached to the body of the sling.		
ii. No rips, tears, holes, or fraying		
iii. No fabric that has been damaged by chemicals or heat e.g., stiff, rough, brittle, or puckered		
j. Fastenings, straps, and coupling or connecting attachment point(s)		
i. Fabric connectors (if present) e.g., loops, have no rips, tears, or holes, fraying, shrinkage or stretching		
ii. Plastic or metal connectors (if present) e.g., clips, key or clip connectors, are not cracked or worn		
iii. Plastic or metal connectors (if present) are securely attached to straps		
iv. Straps are securely fixed to the sling		
v. Fastenings such as Velcro® closures or security buckles are securely fixed		
vi. Have not been altered e.g., knots in the attachment straps		

*** Do not use. Take out of service**

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Sling and Hanger Bar Inspection Checklist for Healthcare Workers		
Healthcare workers should check for the following <u>each time</u> they use a sling:	Yes	If No*
2. The Hanger Bar		
a. Meets or exceeds the weight capacity of the sling to be used (this should be visibly posted on the motor and on the hanger bar if detachable)		
b. Is compatible with the sling to be used (e.g., loop sling/loop hanger bar, clip sling/clip hanger bar; and 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and/or 8-point hanger bar)		
c. Is connected to the lift securely		
d. Has no sign of damage (e.g., dents, chips, bent out of shape, etc.) including all connections e.g., fasteners between the hanger bar and lifting strap or arm		
e. Has connection points that have capping/safety locks if applicable per design.		
f. Connection points capping/safety locks (if applicable) are not damaged or missing		
g. Has no sharp edges or burrs that could damage the sling connection point		
h. Has not been altered		
Tips for checking the sling and hanger bar attachment before lifting and moving a patient		
1. Attach the sling connection points to the hanger bar per manufacturer's instructions and in accordance with the patient's documented care plan, and on the nursing assistant assignment, and/or communication hand-off tool.		
2. The sling/hanger bar combination should provide the best angle and position: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To meet the physical and clinical needs of the patient For the SPHM task to be performed Consider medical attachments to the patient (e.g., intravenous line, catheters, feeding tube, chest tube, tracheotomy; monitors, orthopedic supports such as Halo brace, Thoraco-Lumbo- Sacral-Orthosis (TLSO) brace, traction of extremities). <u>No pinch points or other hazards should be present.</u> 		
3a. Slings with loop style attachment points: All loops are seated and secured in the hanger bar connection point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Without risk of shearing, crushing, or trapping or damaging the sling and ii. So that the locking device if one is present, can be closed correctly. 		
3b. Slings with key or clip attachment points: The key or clip attachment point should be properly attached to the hanger bar and should not become loose.		
4. Ensure straps and/or loops are not twisted and buckles on belts or any other fasteners are secured.		
5. Before raising the patient off the surface - raise the hanger bar until there is tension on the sling straps and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ensure all attachment points are securely fastened to the hanger bar ii. All load bearing loops or straps are secured to the body of a sling iii. Check that hanger bar is positioned to allow sufficient clearance for taller patients when being moved in a sling iv. That the patient is comfortable and that the sling has not shifted into a potentially unsafe position on their body 		
6. Note that the design of the sling when attached to a hanger bar does not change the center of gravity or affect the lift's stability.		
<p style="text-align: center;">Do not use a sling and/or lift, or perform the SPHM task, if above safety considerations are not met</p>		