



10 Steps to Maintain Sling Safety

Mechanical lifts are a vital part of any safe patient handling program. Designed to meet government safety standards and tested rigorously, lifts and their slings are secure and effective tools to prevent patient and caregiver injury.

Like any apparatus, lifts and their accessories require attention to ensure they're in proper working order. Below are steps you can take to maintain safe slings and protect your patients and caregivers.

1. Inspect slings before each use.

Ensure all components of the sling (attachments, fabric, stitching, and loops) do not show signs of wear, damage, discoloration, deterioration, or loose threads. If any of the above is observed, the sling should be replaced.

2. Choose a sling that is compatible with the lift you're using.

Manufacturers design and test slings to work together with lifts. To ensure lifts and slings are compatible, the FDA recommends the sling be approved for use by the original patient lift manufacturer.

3. Choose a sling that is appropriate for the patient you're lifting.

Slings are available for patients of different sizes and weights. Ensure the sling you choose fits the patient correctly and that the patient's weight is within both the sling's and lift's safe working loads.

4. Choose a sling style that is appropriate for the activity.

Different slings are designed to assist with different movements. For example, one sling may help a patient rise to a standing position, but may not be designed to transfer a patient from one bed to another. Ensure the sling you choose is applicable for the task at hand.



5. Equip your staff with lifting education.

Joerns Healthcare's Prevent® safe patient handling team can expertly educate, train and mentor your staff on proper transferring and repositioning techniques, and guide your facility on policy and procedure integration. Our Prevent safe patient handling program is guaranteed to reduce your facility's workplace injuries.

6. Make the sling instruction manual accessible to staff.

File it on the unit and communicate its location and the information it contains to staff.

7. Launder the sling per the manufacturer's instructions.

Hoyer® slings have laundering instructions on their tags and in their manuals, and these instructions should be followed during every wash to prevent material breakdown and maximize a safe, useful life.



8. Write the date the sling went into service on the sling's tag.

Hoyer passive lift slings have a place on the sling tag for you to write this date. With this information, you can estimate how many lifts the sling has performed, and based on your facility's history of sling use, you can project when the sling may need to be discarded.

9. Create a schedule to inspect slings annually.

Make documented sling inspections part of your annual lift maintenance program, and designate the task to someone who doesn't normally inspect the slings for a new and objective set of eyes.

10. Have backup slings on site.

House spare slings in the event you notice a damaged sling and need a replacement.

Proper sling care and maintenance are vital parts of a safe patient handling program. To learn more about lifting safety, call 800.826.0270 and ask to speak with a Prevent safe patient handling representative.