



 MEDACO®  
**A SAFE  
APPROACH TO  
HOISTING**



## INTRODUCTION

People with limited mobility require help to move from one position to another; yet any manual lifting and handling can place a severe strain on the caregiver assisting. This often results in back pain or other injuries. By choosing suitable equipment and using it effectively the risk of injury is considerably reduced and often the quality of life for all concerned is noticeably improved.

Some people complain that a hoist takes too long to use. Often this is because they are unfamiliar with the equipment, or because the equipment is unsuitable for the task. After a thorough reassessment to ensure the equipment is appropriate and with training and practice, the process of using a hoist usually becomes quicker and easier. Ultimately the aim of using equipment is to reduce the risk of the injury to the lowest level possible.

This guidance aims to provide educated information on the types of mobile hoists available and details about their various features.



# THIS INFORMATION SHEET

This learning sheet and checklist illustrates the obstacles associated with hoisting people and sets out guidance to deal with them. It covers fixed, mobile and overhead hoists. The information is designed for health and social care providers or other organisations who move and handle people and will help them to comply with their legal duties.

## THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Hoisting has become a fundamental part of delivering health and social care services. Although hoists can lower musculoskeletal risks, you should examine the additional risks connected with hoisting people. Each year a large number of occurrences are reported in which people have been injured while being moved using hoisting equipment.

In fact reports, an average of 120 incidents per year are reported to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). The level of injury changes, depending on the vulnerability of the hoisted person, the environment and consequences of the fall and what the falling person makes contact with. Falls during hoisting have resulted in severe injuries, from broken bones through to fatalities.

## WHAT CAN GO WRONG?

People can fall during hoisting for a variety of reasons. Problems include:

- Selection of the wrong size sling – resulting in discomfort if the sling is too small and a risk of the person slipping through the sling if it is too large.
- Choice of the wrong type of hoist or sling for the individual, or for the specific task – resulting in inadequate support and increased risk of falling from the sling. For example, access/toileting slings give a great degree of access but very little support and their use should, therefore, be restricted to toileting purposes, where appropriate.
- Incompatibility of the hoist and sling – resulting in insecure attachment between the two. For example, incorrectly attaching a loop on a sling to a spreader bar designed for a clip attachment, or attaching a clip on a sling to a spreader bar designed to take a loop attachment.
- Failure of equipment due to poor maintenance, lack of inspection, inappropriate laundering processes or as a result of inadequate repair or modification.



# THIS INFORMATION SHEET

- Leaving a vulnerable person unattended in a hoist, or in a position where they might be at risk of falling from the bed or chair
- Hoist overturning when manoeuvring over difficult surfaces, transporting an individual over a long distance on a hoist, or not following manufacturer's instructions for use or safe systems of work.
- Not using the safety harness/attachment (if the sling specified for the individual has one).
- Instability when moving someone on a mobile hoist – resulting in them striking objects. This is likely to cause injury, especially to those with vulnerable skin, and will increase the risk of a fall or overturn.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

### THE PERSON

Analyse whether a hoist is the most suitable handling aid and, if so, devise a handling plan to suit the individual's ability and meet their requirements and those of the workers needed. It should define the appropriate hoists and slings for the individual and the type of transfers required. It should also take into account the views and preferences of the individual being hoisted. If in any doubt, speak to us: 03333 22 33 44

The **handling plan** should include a range of activities where a person may require assistance with moving and handling, eg transfers bed to chair, into bath etc. The plan should be simple and clearly state the control measures for moving and handling the individual, including:

Record element's included in your plan (use's tick boxes provided):

- equipment needed
- techniques to be used
- number of carers required
- sling attachments to be used
- leg configurations etc

Examples of a patient moving and handling assessment on Wales NHS Manual Handling Training Passport and Information Scheme: Click [here](#)



# THIS INFORMATION SHEET

## THE EQUIPMENT

This learning sheet and checklist illustrates the obstacles associated with hoisting people and sets out guidance to deal with them. It covers fixed, mobile and overhead hoists. The information is designed for health and social care providers or other organisations who move and handle people and will help them to comply with their legal duties.

## THE STAFF

This learning sheet and checklist illustrates the obstacles associated with hoisting people and sets out guidance to deal with them. It covers fixed, mobile and overhead hoists. The information is designed for health and social care providers or other organisations who move and handle people and will help them to comply with their legal duties.

- follow appropriate systems of work, as identified for individuals in their handling plan, and use the equipment provided;
- co-operate with their employer and let them know of any problems; and
- take care to ensure that their activities do not put others at risk

## THE LIFT

Before hoisting, initiate an assessment of the risks, taking account of the individual's handling plan, and put in place procedures to lessen the risk of injury. Lifting operations should be correctly planned and carried out in a safe manner in accordance with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER). The Workplace, Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 require those in control of workplaces to make sure that floors and traffic routes are maintained in good condition and free from obstructions, and that there is suitable lighting and ventilation in the workplace.



## MAINTENANCE

Ensure there are adequate systems in place for maintenance and inspection of hoists and slings in line with the manufacturer's instructions, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and LOLER. The MHRA device bulletin on managing medical devices, DB2006(05), gives some guidance on this topic.



### LOLER

Where lifting equipment, including hoists and slings, is used by people at work the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations apply. In addition to routine maintenance and servicing, LOLER requires lifting equipment to be inspected and thoroughly examined.

### THOROUGH EXAMINATION

by a 'competent person' is required either at six-monthly intervals or in accordance with a written scheme of examination drawn up by a 'competent person'. A competent person is someone with the relevant technical knowledge and practical experience of lifting equipment to enable them to detect defects or weaknesses and to assess their importance in relation to the safety and continued use of the specific equipment being examined.

Medaco is the UK's top servicing and maintenance. We work within healthcare organisations, ensuring our customers have the right products, are LOLER compliant, operating equipment safely, and doing all those things — big and small — that support the long-life of their patient handling equipment. Want to find out more? Talk to us [here](#).



## MONITORING

Check that handling plans are being followed, and revise and update if the needs of the individual or other factors affecting the plan change.

## TRAINING

Employers need to make sure that staff receive adequate training and information on people moving and handling. Practical training has an important role to play in ensuring that staff have the skills and confidence to hoist people safely. In addition to practising equipment selection and use, staff need to understand the principles of hoisting, the potential risks, how to use the specific equipment they have in their workplace and how to implement individual handling plans.

It is important that supervisors also receive training so that they are able to monitor, identify and correct poor practice. There is no firm rule about how often training should be given. However, skills will inevitably deteriorate over time. Provide update or refresher training periodically, or when competency assessment identifies the need for further training. You will also need to provide training when new lifting aids are introduced, or there are changes to the method of work.

The annexes to this guidance provide safety checks and other measures for employers and those hoisting people to consider to help them ensure safe handling. Figure 1 provides a checklist for using a mobile hoist in the form of a useful flowchart.

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## RESOURCE 1: CHECKLIST TO HELP WITH HOISTING

The following checklist, compiled by a group of manual handling professionals, represents safe handling practice and will remind those hoisting people of points to consider to reduce the risk. The list does not aim to cover every individual circumstance and assumes that the handler has received relevant and current training in the transfers and equipment used.

### CHECKLIST:

#### ALL HOISTING TASKS

- Review the person's condition prior to each transfer to ensure continued suitability for hoisting and the use of the equipment.
- Ensure the person's weight does not exceed the SWL of both the hoist and sling.
- Do not use the hoist/sling unless you have had the necessary training.
- Check the correct hoist and sling specified in the handling plan are available and servicing and thorough examination are in date.

- Ensure the equipment works and is free from observable defects before starting.
- Before each use, check the hoist and sling in accordance with the equipment manufacturer's guidance on inspections and pre-use checks.
- Familiarise yourself with the hoist's emergency lowering systems.
- Check there is a sufficient number of handlers to carry out the task safely in accordance with the handling plan.
- Ensure the environment is free from obstacles and the floor free of slip and trip risks.
- Ensure the support surface is ready and safe to receive the person.



## RESOURCE 1: CHECKLIST TO HELP WITH HOISTING

- When manoeuvring the hoist into position to connect to the sling, bring the spreader bar/carry bar down slowly, holding where necessary, to avoid contact injuries with the individual.
- If there are any concerns about the equipment, task, person, environment etc, handlers must follow organisational procedures immediately.
- Communicate with everyone involved in the task at all times.
- Ensure safety and comfort of the person at all times
- Reassure the person at all times and involve them as much as possible
- Prior to raising, check the sling is positioned correctly and double check the sling attachments

- Hoist the person just above the surface from which they are being lifted to obtain sufficient clearance.
- Check attachments remain secure and the person is comfortable before proceeding further.
- If there are any problems, lower the person into a safe position and seek further advice.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and local policies and procedures with regard to care and cleaning of the hoist.
- Place battery-powered hoists on charge, as identified in the instructions, when not in use or ensure back-up battery is charged.
- Ensure the support surface is ready and safe to receive the person.



## RESOURCE 1: CHECKLIST TO HELP WITH HOISTING

### Additional guidance for mobile hoists

- Avoid using the hoist to transport over distances, thresholds or different surfaces unless otherwise stated in the handling plan.
- Do not apply brakes during hoisting with mobile hoists (unless otherwise stated by the manufacturer and handling plan). Note: This does not apply to certain types of equipment where the brakes need to be applied, for example standaids.
- Ensure hoist legs are in the most stable position.
- Store the hoist in a safe place with boom/jib in lowest position and with brakes on when not in use.

### Additional guidance for ceiling track/overhead hoisting systems

- The motor should be directly overhead, and make sure the lifting tape is vertical to the lift to avoid wear and tear and/or malfunction.
- Elevate the spreader bar to its highest possible position when not in use.
- Return the hoist to its docking station, where appropriate, for charging when not in use.
- Ensure the tracking and pathway is clear of obstructions.
- Be familiar with how freely the motor moves on the tracking.
- Do not drag the pod/motor using the lifting tape as it may cause damage to the hoist.



## RESOURCE 1: CHECKLIST TO HELP WITH HOISTING

### Additional guidance for standing hoists

- The person must be able to consistently and reliably bear weight through their legs and have sufficient upper body muscle strength/sitting balance.
- The person must be able to co-operate and physically participate in the hoisting process.
- Some standing hoists need using with care if the person has knee problems, sensitivity or vulnerable skin on their legs.

### Additional guidance for slings

- Ensure the sling is compatible with the hoist.
- Double check the loops/clips are attached to the spreader bar throughout the hoisting procedure.

- Use the correct loop/clip configurations as identified in the handling plan.

- Ensure the sling and attachments are not caught/ stuck on any equipment when starting the lift.

### Additional guidance for bath hoists

- Make sure staff are fully trained on the specific bath hoist and with the equipment in the bathrooms. For example, height-adjustable baths etc.
- Ensure correct fitting of lap strap (also known as safety belt/seat belt/safety harness) unless otherwise risk assessed.
- Mobile and ceiling track hoists may also be used for bathing – see mobile and ceiling track hoist guidance.



# EQUIPMENT SAFETY CHECKS PRIOR TO EACH USE

- Is the equipment as specified in the handling plan?
- Do the hoist and sling have a 'CE' mark on them?
- Is the person's weight below the SWL of both the hoist and sling?
- Are hoists and slings within LOLER thorough examination dates?
- Has the hoist been serviced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions?
- Has there been any change in the individual's circumstances since the handling plan was devised?
- Has a visual check of the equipment been carried out prior to using it?
- Is the environment ready?
- Is there sufficient space to use the hoist safely?

## Hoists – mobile (electric and hydraulic), ceiling track systems, stand aid, bath Ensure:

- the hoist is fully charged, the battery and any leads are fitted correctly;
- there are no obvious signs of damage or fluid leaks from the hoist;
- the raise/lower mechanism works and the emergency stop button is set correctly;
- the lifting tape is intact and not frayed (applies to ceiling track, certain mobile hoists);
- the castors move freely, ie free from carpet fibres/ fluff etc (mobile and standing hoists); and
- the base adjustment/hoist legs move freely (mobile and standing hoists).

## Slings Ensure:

- the sling is the correct size and type for the client and is fit for purpose;
- sling and hoist are compatible;
- all labels are legible and show the SWL and unique identifier and size;
- there are no signs of fraying, tears or deterioration etc;
- all stitching is present and intact;
- the velcro (if applicable) is clean and free of fibres/ fluff etc;
- the buckle (if applicable) has no signs of damage etc;
- the loops/clips have no obvious signs of damage, fraying etc; and
- it has been cleaned.

## Environment

- the environment is prepared for the task;
- there is sufficient space and access around and under furniture to use the hoist safely;
- the floor is clear of obstacles, eg trailing cables; and
- there is a suitable and safe area to store and charge (if applicable) the hoist.

These guidelines have been developed using the following sources: National Back Exchange , HSE, Solent (NHS), Care Quality Commission.



## MAINTENANCE AND SERVICING

It is important that equipment such as hoists is maintained regularly to keep it in good working order.

Hoist users need to ensure daily checks are completed as recommended in the instructions for use. In the domestic situation a relative carer, formal carer, a visiting health worker or the user might complete this.

The owner of the hoist has the duty to ensure faults are repaired. It is essential to keep a note of who is the owner and to whom faults should be reported. It is advisable to keep a written record of the date and type of faults reported and of the repairs carried out. Formal checks and servicing also need recording.

It is recommended in the British Standard for mobile hoists that they should be serviced by competent personnel at regular intervals of not more than 12 months. Ensure that responsibility for this is established at the time of provision - especially if the funding has come from several sources.

The Lifting Operation and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (part of Health and Safety at Work Legislation) places a duty on the employer to ensure equipment used by the employee for lifting people is also checked every six months by a competent person if the equipment is exposed to conditions liable to result in a dangerous situation.

It is wise to complete a six monthly check as, over time, the person's abilities and his/her size may vary, carers change and the environmental demands differ. Sometimes it is necessary to have a more frequent check.

## MEDACO SOLUTION

Medaco offers a comprehensive range of flexible service contracts to suit your requirements and budget, all designed to optimise the performance of your medical equipment and meet UK compliance standards. Reporting and equipment condition summaries can also be included to provide effective asset management to achieve lean operational efficiencies.

Making sure your facility is running at maximum operational capability is more than simply investing in the right equipment, you need to be certain everything is working at full capacity. Regular servicing and preventative maintenance of equipment ensures continued reliability, prolongs their useful life, minimises the risk of emergency breakdowns and ensures less exposure to manual handling related injuries to carers as a result of equipment failure, leading to increased staff absences.





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## CONTACT US

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