

Quality & Safety Alert

Slings & Harnesses



Official Notification:

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety (CCOHS) recommends using only slings and harnesses that are approved by the lift equipment manufacturer.

Tollos, Inc. does not recommend any slings other than those provided by Tollos for use on our ceiling lifts, mobile lifts, sit-to-stands, or any other equipment manufactured in our facility that uses slings & harnesses.

Tollos, Inc. makes no claim as to the safety or efficacy of off-brand, non-Tollos slings & harnesses. Use of these products could lead to clinician injury, patient injury, or even death. Tollos, Inc. is not responsible for adverse effects that occur due to the use of off-brand, non-Tollos slings and harnesses and shall not be held liable for any unfortunate occurrences.

The CCOHS also states that not every sling is suitable for every lift. Sling types and brands should be matched to the equipment with which they are being used.

The complete statement for the CCOHS regarding lifts and slings is available at <https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/2012/08/ezone.html>. There is a copy of the CCOHS article (as it reads on 02-2021) on the reverse of this document.

All Tollos slings and harnesses are guaranteed to be free from defects in material or workmanship right out of the box. Additionally, Tollos reusable slings and harnesses come with a one-year warranty. Complete terms and conditions can be referenced here: <https://www.tollos.com/terms-conditions>.

All Tollos slings and harnesses are weight-tested with our own equipment, helping to ensure patient & clinician safety when used with our equipment. Off-brand and non-Tollos slings & harnesses are not tested with any of the equipment we supply.

All Tollos slings and harnesses are made from durable, specifically-sourced fabrics to prevent fraying and tearing.

Therefore, in the interest of patient & clinician safety, the use of off-brand, non-Tollos slings & harnesses is not recommended by Tollos or the CCOHS, and may void your equipment warranty.

Darrell Hinger
VP of QRCS, Tollos, Inc.
dhinger@tollos.com

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Hazard Alert

▼ Patient Lifts and Worker Risks

If you have ever tried to move or lift someone on your own, unassisted, you can appreciate the challenges faced by caregivers and healthcare workers for whom patient handling is a part of their daily job. While mechanical lifts make it much easier to move and lift patients and can help reduce the ergonomic risks associated with manual patient handling, they also introduce other workplace hazards. Nova Scotia recently released a hazard alert to help reduce injuries to attendants who work with patient lifts (also known as hoists).

There are many types of lifts including:

- wheeled hoist/portable floor lift,
- stationary hoist/fixed lift,
- ceiling track complete with motor,
- sit/stand lifting aid, and
- bath lifts.

Hospitals, long term care facilities and private homes use mechanical lifting systems to move or reposition patients/clients with mobility issues. Client lifting poses an injury risk to the attendant, however because the task cannot be eliminated, engineering solutions were created in the form of mechanical lifts.

Mechanical lifting systems have been the source of injury, and even deaths, to clients and attendants, mainly related to the malfunction, failure, or misuse of patient lifts. This hazard alert focuses on the hazards to attendants (workers).

New hazards related to patient lifts include falling suspended parts, dropped loads, equipment failure, structural failure, and electric shocks. There is also the risk of body strain if a hoist should fail and an attendant tries to catch a falling client.

INJURY PREVENTION

The following tips from Nova Scotia and best practices from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration offer practical guidance to help prevent injuries to attendants using patient lifts.

Legislation

Find out about, and meet, the legal requirements in your own jurisdiction for the use of patient/resident/client lifts in workplaces. Some general requirements may include: providing adequate lifting equipment; proper training of employees who use this equipment; proper installing, testing, operating, use of, servicing, maintenance and repair of any lifting machine in accordance with the manufacturer's or an engineer's specifications.

Slings safety

Slings are a key part of the lifting system. It is important to use the correct sling - the one approved for use by the patient lift manufacturer - for the specific hoist. The safe working load (SWL) must be clearly marked on both the lift and the sling. Take care to ensure the sling is compatible with the load limits of the lift and the patient's weight. Perform sling care according to the manufacturer's specifications. Inspect the sling fabric and straps to make sure they are not frayed or stressed at the seams or otherwise damaged, and if there are signs of wear, do not use it.

Equipment inspections

The manufacturer's specifications will likely provide a frequency for periodic inspections and pre-use inspections. The periodic inspection requires documentation to demonstrate it has been completed. Pre-use inspections ensure that compatible parts are used and properly configured, and that load restrictions are not exceeded. They also identify any visible signs of damage to equipment that may lead to a failure. Create a system to ensure that defective equipment is clearly marked and taken out of service until replaced or repaired.

Tips for users of patient lifts

- Be trained on, and understand, how to operate the lift.
- Fasten all clips, latches, and hanger bars securely during operation.
- Keep the base (legs) of the patient lift in the maximum open position and position the lift to provide stability.
- Ensure the patient's arms are inside the sling straps.
- Lock the wheels on any device that will receive the patient such as a wheelchair, stretcher, bed, or chair.
- Ensure that the weight limitations for the lift and sling are not exceeded.
- Follow the instructions for washing and maintaining the sling.
- Follow a maintenance safety inspection checklist to detect worn or damaged parts that need immediate replacement.

Regardless of size, all workplaces can benefit from a code-of-practice, or safe work procedure for hoist operation, inspection and maintenance.

More information

[Incidents Involving Patient Lifts](#), Health Canada

[Patient and Resident Lifts Hazard Alert](#) (PDF), Government of Nova Scotia

[Patient Lifts](#), FDA, U.S. Food and Drug Administration