

Lifting slings at a glance

What the colour and label tell you

BS EN 1492

Textile sling colours

Working load limit for a straight lift.



Many makers also weave one black stripe per tonne; BS EN 1492 does not require it. Slings over 10 t are orange as well.

ON SITE

Before you lift

Checks for every sling, based on LEEA's code.



Label readable

Every sling has a readable label or tag.



Webbing edges sound

No cuts or broken stitching.



Roundsling cover intact

No inner core showing through.



Chain links sound

No stretched links; hooks not opened out.



Examination in date

Within 6 months, or as the scheme sets.



Fibres undamaged

No sign of heat, weld spatter or chemicals.



Wire rope sound

No kinks or broken wires; ferrule whole.



Shackle pin matched

The maker's pin, the same grade as the body.

LABELS AND MARKS

What to read

Where each sling shows its limit.

Textile label colour

Shows the material: blue for polyester, green for polyamide, brown for polypropylene.

Textile label

Working load limit, identity number, length and material.

Wire rope sling

A metal tag with working load limit and identity, often also on the ferrule.

Chain sling

A tag with the working load limit and grade marks on the links.

OFTEN MISREAD

Common mix-ups

Points people often get wrong.

Read the label for capacity

HSE says colour alone is not normally enough as the marking.

Hitch and angle change capacity

A single sling's label is for a straight lift. Chokes and wide leg angles lower it.

Tag colours are a site system

Coloured inspection tags are set by the site or examiner, outside any standard.

Six-monthly examination

At least every 6 months, unless a written scheme sets another interval.

Sources: BS EN 1492-1 and -2 (textile slings), BS EN 13414 (wire rope slings) and BS EN 818 (chain slings), described in our own words; LEEA's Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Lifting Equipment; LOLER 1998 and HSE guidance. LOLER applies in Great Britain; Northern Ireland has LOLER (NI) 1999. **Last reviewed 2 October 2026.** A summary, not the standards themselves.

