

NMSA – OSHA Alliance Container Lashing Safety Tip Sheet



Container Lashing Safety Tip Sheet

The lashing and unlashings of containers represents one of the greatest areas of risk in the Marine Cargo Handling Industry.

Proper lashing training, procedures and policies and constant reinforcement of safe work practices are essential for ensuring the safety of all workers, both aboard vessels and ashore.

The goal of this document is to provide a quick refresher handout for Lashers and Lashing Supervisors prior to start of any lashing job.

Proper Lashing Procedures and Policies:

- Wear PPE, such as a hard hat, reflective vest, steel toe shoes and gloves.
- Stretch and warm-up muscles before starting work.
- Do not walk under a suspended load. Be aware of moving equipment and loads overhead especially when boarding or stepping off a gangway.
- Take care while moving around a ship. Be aware of tripping hazards and overhead obstructions.
- Catwalks, work platforms, railings, etc., should be inspected prior to operations. Close all manhole covers prior to lashing.
- Understand the orders for lashing or unlashings.
- Coordinate lashing/unlashings operations with plugging and unplugging of reefer containers. Power cords should be arranged so that they are not tripping hazards. Be aware of and do not touch damaged electrical cords.
- Stow or arrange unused lashing gear to prevent tripping hazards.
- All materials on a hatch cover (such as lashing gear and dunnage) must be removed or secured before the cover is moved.
- Be aware of fall hazards while lashing outside containers on the hatch cover or pedestals. Make sure guard rails are in place and secure, or use fall protection.
- Be aware of hazards that may exist over the side while lashing outside containers (e.g. persons ashore or bunker barges or vessels alongside).
- Fall arrest harnesses and proper equipment must be used by all personnel going aloft for "top-down" unlocking of semi-automatic twistlocks (SATLs).
- It is best practice not to lash or unlash any closer than at least 3 container widths away from any operation. (Note: this is a minimum distance. Local port areas may have different rules on this separation distance.)
- Work in teams of two when handling rods and turnbuckles.

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- Do not: 1) Leave lashing rods hanging; 2) Pre-hang rods; 3) Stand them up or break loose a turnbuckle and leave the rod hanging. When securing a rod to the turnbuckle secure and tighten it right away.
- Walk the bars up. Slide them down. Control the rod at all times.
- Report defective lashing gear (damaged or broken gear, stuck twist lock or bent bars, etc.) immediately to the lashing supervisor so gear in bad order may be taken out of service.

Supervisor Responsibilities and Reinforcement:

- Inspect all ship work areas and ensure that no work is done where a fall hazard exists or where there is inadequate lighting.
- Conduct Gangway Meetings and/or Gangway Safety Talks prior to each shift about the various hazards associated with lashing. Include a review of basic lashing safety procedures.
- Communicate specific safety issues noted with the current vessel and its equipment.
- Constantly monitor lashing operations.
- Immediately correct any unsafe behavior.
- Directly supervise non-routine events (such as a stuck cone) by personally coordinating crane movements and ensuring no one will be caught in a bight.

Although there are no specific OSHA regulations that address lashing, there are several regulations that pertain to facets of the operation that should be noted.

1. Working at heights ([1918.85\(j\)](#) & [1918.85\(k\)](#))
2. Housekeeping ([1918.91](#))
3. Handling hatch beams and covers (1918.43(i))
4. Illumination ([1918.92](#))
5. PPE ([1918 Subpart J](#))
6. Working under suspended loads ([1918.85\(e\)](#))
7. Fall hazard definition ([1918.2](#))
8. Lifting personnel aloft ([1917.45\(j\)](#))

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