



Safety Guidance

The Use of Chains to Support Shoring Equipment

It is current practice throughout the UK shoring industry to use chain assemblies to support shoring frames when installed within an excavation. There is often considerable confusion as to whether these "hanging" or "restraining" chains should be regarded as lifting equipment and therefore come within the provisions of the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998, (LOLER).

LOLER defines lifting equipment as "work equipment for lifting or lowering loads and includes its attachments used for anchoring, fixing and supporting it". Hanging or restraining chains are not (and must not be) used for lifting or lowering a load and therefore fall outside the scope of LOLER.

Inspection of hanging chains

Hanging or restraining chains do not require the statutory six monthly thorough examinations as stipulated in Regulation 9(3)(a)(i) of LOLER, since they are not regarded as lifting equipment.

However, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 require that all work equipment is maintained (Regulation 5) and inspected (Regulation 6) at suitable intervals and it is standard practice to inspect each hanging chain assembly before it is sent out on hire. This inspection forms part of the supplier's recorded equipment maintenance procedures.

Design of hanging chains

The design of restraining or hanging chains is related to the weight of the equipment type to which it is attached. The design of these chains will be covered in a new European Standard which will be published in the near future *"Manually Operated Hydraulic Shoring Systems for groundwork support - Part 1: Product specifications"*.

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Shoring Technology Interest Group (STIG)
Construction Plant-Hire Association
52 Rochester Row
London
SW1P 1JU
Telephone: 020 7630 6868
E-mail: enquiries@cpa.uk.net