



Chain Reaction!

Skip Hire Magazine's 'get up close and personal' article on chains (The Vital Link, Issue 121, December 2015 / January 16) certainly sparked a lot of interest – and for all the right reasons.

We flagged up the fact that, like it or not, chains on a skip loader are actually a 'lifting application' and thus covered by a range of tests, compliance, examination, inspection and other safety requirements, including LOLER.

First up with a load of helpful guidance information are our friends at the HSE – see panel below for the links to relevant publications covering the whole subject of lifting equipment, inspection and maintenance, proper use, etcetera.

Then we learned that a number of organisations in the industry had been prompted to review, update and formalise exactly what they do about chains – from assembly, through inspection, to replacement and parts. All good positive stuff which only improves the reputation of our industry (let alone the magazine!), but most importantly, could save someone from serious injury as well.

Skip chains should be and, for the most part, are assembled from high quality components, manufactured, inspected and certified as suitable and appropriate for the job. Once the chain and fittings have been assembled, each individual complete assembly must be tested and a certificate issued.

That certificate will then 'live' with the chain when it enters service. Some manufacturers

are now going one stage further and running a full equipment operating test under LOLER procedures as part of the pre-delivery inspection – and issuing a new first LOLER compliance certificate with the new vehicle.

Once in service, it is the responsibility of the operator to inspect, 'thoroughly examine' and test the chains every six months – and some manufacturers are now going to include that obligation as part of their warranty terms on the equipment.

In the event that a chain requires replacement in service, the new chain must be of an identical pattern and specification as the original – and matched to the rest of the set. It should be supplied with a test certificate – and if it's not, ask for one – or don't buy it!

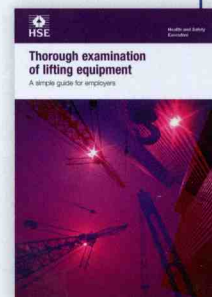
Finally, it appears to be the responsibility of the driver / operative to include the condition and functionality of chains as part of his daily vehicle checks before he starts work, including reporting any defects... and the operator is obliged to provide the necessary training to ensure that this important area is not overlooked or taken for granted.

So there you have it ... officially ... work safe!

HSE produces a range of helpful information and publications, much of which is available on line.

The key leaflet in the context of chains on skip loaders is 'Thorough examination of lifting equipment, a simple guide for employers' INDG422. For a web-friendly version of the leaflet, go to www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg422.pdf

This leaflet is also available in priced packs of 15 from HSE Books, ISBN 978 0 7176 6305 7. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books



Other useful sources include:

'Safe use of lifting equipment'. Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L113 HSE Books 1998 ISBN 978 0 7176 1628 2 (reprinted 2007)

'Safe use of work equipment'. Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L22 (Third edition) HSE Books 2008 ISBN 978 0 7176 6295 1

'Simple guide to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998' Leaflet INDG290 HSE Books 1999 – also available online at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290.pdf