

Medical Device/Equipment ALERT

Ref. MDEA(NI)2007/16

Issued: 8th February 2007

For:

IMMEDIATE ACTION	
ACTION	✓
UPDATE	
INFORMATION	



HEALTH ESTATES

creating healing environments

	Section
Medical Device/Equipment: Laundry damage to patient liftings slings with rigid plastic clips	▶ ①
Problem: Failure during use	▶ ②
Action by: All appropriate managers, staff and users.	▶ ③
Action: All users of patient lifting slings with rigid plastic clips should be identified and training should be reviewed to ensure the pre-use checks, periodic inspections and thorough examinations of these slings include a check for damaged clips.	▶ ④
Distributed by NIAIC to: Chief Executive of each HSS Board Chief Executive of each HSS Trust Chief Executive of each Agency NIAIC Liaison Officers	▶ ⑤
Contacts NIAIC contacts for technical aspects	▶ ⑥
Feedback Requirements to NIAIC None required	▶ ⑦

This Alert is on our web site: <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic>

1. DEVICE/EQUIPMENT:

Laundry damage to patient liftings slings with rigid plastic clips

2. PROBLEM:

An incident occurred in which a patient fell while being lifted from a commode in a hoist sling. The sling was examined after the incident and found to have a broken rigid plastic clip on a shoulder strap. This caused the sling to partially detach from the spreader bar, allowing the patient to fall.

Investigation revealed that the rigid plastic clips used on some slings can be damaged if they are passed through a mechanical press during laundering. To prevent this, soiled laundry requires to be sorted manually so that slings with rigid plastic clips are diverted to a process with no mechanical press. Clear visual identification of slings is essential to the effectiveness of the sorting process.

It is possible that the sling involved in the reported incident had a clip damaged, but not broken, in a mechanical press. When it was returned to the ward, it was subjected to a visual pre-use check but the damage to the clip was not spotted (see Figures 1 and 2 on page 3 for typical damage). When placed under load, the clip broke and the patient fell.

Anecdotal accounts suggest that damage to clips is a relatively common occurrence and as reusable slings may cost in the region of £100 - £250 each, this has financial implications.

The LOLER Regulations require that lifting operations are carried out in a safe manner and the PUWER Regulations require that work equipment is maintained in a safe condition for use so that people's health and safety are not at risk.

This notice supplements the advice given in Safety Action Notices SN(NI)2000/25

3. ACTION BY:

All appropriate managers, staff and users

4. ACTION:

All users of patient lifting slings with rigid plastic clips should be identified and training should be reviewed to ensure the pre-use checks, periodic inspections and thorough examinations of these slings include a check for damaged clips.

Any sling which is found or suspected to have a damaged clip should be removed from use, placed in quarantine and not used again until it has passed a thorough examination. Arrangements should be in place to ensure lifting operations may continue uninterrupted should a sling require to be removed following a pre-use check, periodic inspection or thorough examination.

Central laundering policies and procedures should be reviewed to ensure that slings with rigid plastic clips are not laundered in a process that includes a mechanical press. It is recommended that these slings should be bagged separately from other linen, differently colour coded to identify the contents as being unsuitable for a laundering process that includes a mechanical press. The outer bag would be removed immediately before laundering.

5. ONWARD DISTRIBUTION TO:

Please bring this notice to the attention of all who need to know or be aware of it. This will include distribution to:

- Liaison Officers
- Risk Managers
- Health & Safety Officers/Advisors
- Clinical Governance Leads
- Device Managers
- Estates Managers
- Occupational Therapists
- Physiotherapists
- Rehabilitation Engineers
- Medical Directors
- Clinical Directors
- Nurse Directors
- Medical, Nursing and Care Staff
- Ambulance Staff and Paramedics
- Maternity Wards
- Practice Nurses
- Directors of Public Health
- Social Care Staff
- Community Care Staff
- Independent Health and Social Care Providers – Private Clinics, Residential and Nursing Homes through RQIA
- Community Stores

6. CONTACTS:

Enquires to manufacturer should be addressed to the relative Manufacturer/Supplier:

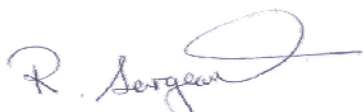
Enquires to NIAIC should quote reference number MDEA(NI)2007/16 and be addressed to:

Northern Ireland Adverse Incident Centre (NIAIC)
Health Estates
Estate Policy Directorate
Stoney Road
Dundonald
Belfast BT16 1US

Tel: 028 9052 3868
Fax: 028 9052 3900
Email: NIAIC@dhsspsni.gov.uk

7. FEEDBACK:

None Required



Robert Sergeant
NIAIC Operational Manager

HOW TO REPORT ADVERSE INCIDENTS

Adverse Incidents relating to medical devices, non-medical equipment, plant and buildings should be reported to NIAIC as soon as possible. Advice on how to report is given in MDEA(NI)2006/01. If you are in doubt about how to report incidents, please speak to your liaison officer or contact NIAIC using the telephone number provided. Adverse Incident reporting forms and an on-line reporting facility are available on the NIAIC website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/niaic

Heath Estates is an Executive Agency of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

LAUNDRY DAMAGE TO PATIENT LIFTING SLINGS WITH RIGID PLASTIC CLIPS: FAILURE DURING USE

APPENDIX



Figure 1

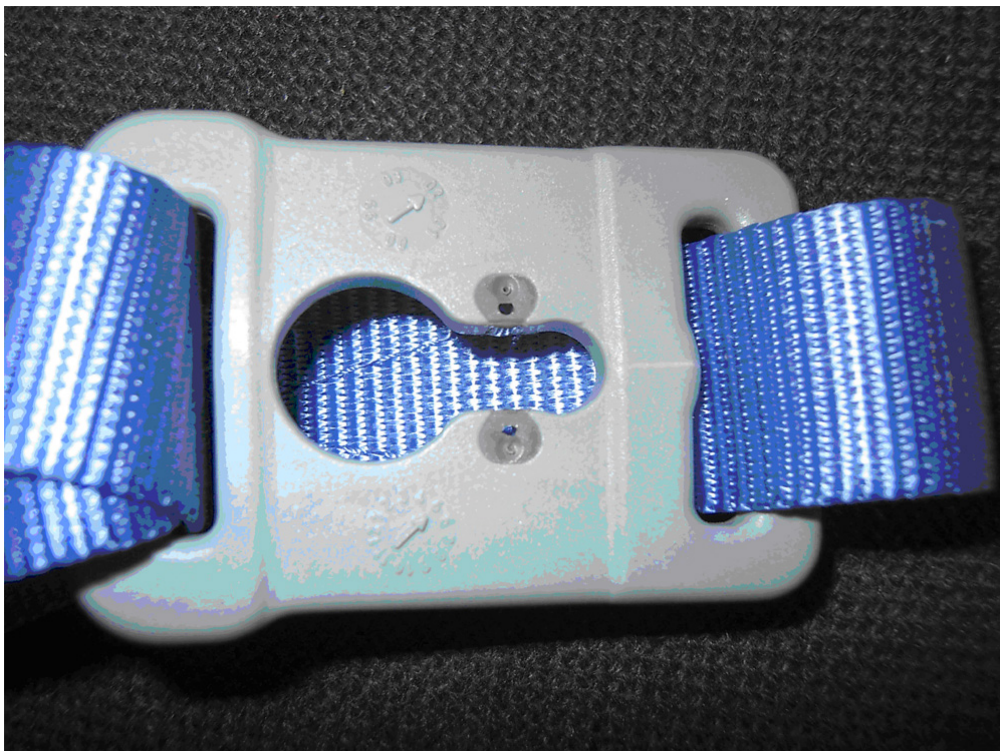


Figure 2