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• **Standard Number:** [1910.181\(a\)\(29\)](#); [1910.181\(j\)\(2\)](#); [1910.184\(c\)\(6\)](#); [1917.45](#); [1918.66](#); [1918.81](#); [1926.753](#)

**This letter constitutes OSHA's interpretation only of the requirements discussed and may not be applicable to any situation not delineated within the original correspondence.**

January 10, 2006

Mr. Craig McCandless  
Ashley Sling, Inc.  
100 Great S.W. Parkway  
Atlanta, GA 30336

Dear Mr. McCandless:

This is in response to your letter of August 16, 2005, requesting clarification of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements for safety latches on hoisting hooks. You indicated in your letter that the requirements for latches on hooks were only stated in the OSHA standard at 29 CFR 1910.181, *Derricks*, and you found no such mention in §1910.184, which contains requirements for *Slings*. Your paraphrased question and our response are provided below.

**Question:** Does OSHA require the use of latches on hooks on slings?

**Response:** Whether OSHA requires a safety latch on a sling hook depends on the activity for which the sling is being used.

You are correct that although the standard for slings provides that "[s]lings shall be securely attached to their loads," the

section does not explicitly require that the hook be equipped with a safety latch (29 CFR §1910.184(c)(6)). Use of a hook with a safety latch would, of course, be one way of securely attaching a sling to its load. As you also noted, OSHA's standard for derricks does include an explicit requirement for latch type hooks: "Hooks shall meet the manufacturer's recommendations... [and] [s]afety latch type hooks shall be used wherever possible." (29 CFR §1910.181(j)(2)(i) and 1910.181(j)(2)(ii)). The standard defines "safety hook" as "a hook with a latch to prevent slings or load from accidentally slipping off the hook." (29 CFR §1910.181(a)(29)).

We would also call your attention to the following provisions in OSHA's maritime and construction standards: 29 CFR Part 1917, Marine Terminals, at 29 CFR §1917.45(e)(2) ("Crane hooks shall be latched or otherwise secured to prevent accidental load disengagement."); 29 CFR Part 1918, Safety and Health Regulations for Longshoring, at 29 CFR §1918.66(e)(2) ("Crane hooks shall be latched or otherwise secured to prevent accidental load disengagement."), and at §1918.81(b) ("Cargo handling bridles, such as pallet bridles, which are to remain attached to the hoisting gear while hoisting successive drafts, shall be attached by shackles, or other positive means shall be taken to prevent them from being accidentally disengaged from the cargo hook."); and 29 CFR Part 1926, Safety and Health Regulations for Construction, at 29 CFR §1926.753(d)(2)(ii) (in specified situations, "Hooks with self-closing safety latches or their equivalent shall be used to prevent components from slipping out of the hook...").

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 also contemplates that, in the absence of a specific OSHA standard addressing a hazard, employers are required, by the statute's "General Duty Clause" (Section 5(a)(1)), to protect employees from serious recognized hazards. OSHA often considers the provisions of industry consensus standards, such as those published by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME), when evaluating whether a hazard is "recognized" and whether there is a feasible means of abating that hazard. One such provision that OSHA would consider is Section 2-1.14.5, Hooks, of ASME 30.2-2001, Overhead and Gantry Cranes: "Latch-equipped hooks shall be used unless the application makes the use of the latch impractical or unnecessary."

Thank you for your interest in occupational safety and health. OSHA requirements are set by statute, standards, and regulations. Our interpretation letters explain these requirements and how they apply to particular circumstances, but they cannot create additional employer obligations. This letter constitutes OSHA's interpretation of the requirements discussed. Note that our enforcement guidance may be affected by changes to OSHA rules. Also, from time to time we update our guidance in response to new information. To keep apprised of such developments, you can consult OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Office of General Industry Enforcement at (202) 693-1850.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Fairfax, Director  
Directorate of Enforcement Programs

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U.S. Department of Labor | Occupational Safety & Health Administration | 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210  
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