

SAFE USE OF MANUAL CHAIN BLOCKS

Applies to: Yale, Tiger, William Hackett, CM, and similar types

Purpose

Manual chain blocks (also known as hand chain hoists) are designed for lifting and lowering suspended loads using a hand-operated chain and internal gear mechanism. They are used where precise vertical lifting or positioning is required. This leaflet provides guidance for safe operation to prevent accidents, dropped loads, or equipment failure.

Before Use

- Inspect the hoist – Check hooks, body casing, load chain, and hand chain for cracks, corrosion, deformation, or missing parts.
- Verify SWL (Safe Working Load) – The hoist's rated capacity must exceed the total load weight.
- Check certification – Ensure all lifting accessories (slings, shackles, chains, etc.) have valid inspection tags.
- Confirm suspension – The top hook or trolley must be securely attached to a load-bearing structure capable of supporting the full load.
- Check hook latches – Ensure safety latches close properly and are not bent, missing, or damaged.
- Check the load chain – Ensure it hangs freely and is not twisted, kinked, or knotted.
- Test operation – Apply a light load to ensure smooth chain travel and brake engagement.
- Ensure operator competence – Only trained and authorised personnel should use chain blocks.

During Operation

- Position correctly – The hoist must be vertically aligned with the load to avoid side-loading.
- Lift steadily – Pull the hand chain smoothly; avoid jerking or rapid movements.
- Test lift – Raise the load slightly to confirm balance, grip, and brake function.
- Maintain clear area – Keep all personnel clear of the lifting zone and never stand beneath the load.
- Maintain control – Use tag lines to guide suspended loads if needed.
- Use correct communication – Apply standard signals or radios when visibility is restricted.
- Lower carefully – Operate slowly and smoothly to prevent uncontrolled descent or swing.

Do Not

- Exceed the hoist's rated capacity.
- Use the load chain as a sling or wrap it around the load.
- Use if hooks, latches, or chains are bent, stretched, or damaged.
- Operate the hoist at an angle or pull sideways on the chain.
- Leave suspended loads unattended.
- Use the hoist to lift or support people.
- Modify or tamper with safety components.
- Use the hoist in corrosive or explosive environments unless specifically rated.

After Use

- Lower the load completely and remove tension from the chain.
- Wipe clean and inspect for wear or damage.
- Tag out and report any defects to your supervisor immediately.

- Store the hoist in a clean, dry area, hanging by its top hook when possible.
- Protect chains from moisture, dirt, and mechanical damage.

Safety Reminders

- Always follow the manufacturer's specific operating instructions.
- Conduct a risk assessment and lifting plan before each operation.
- Never exceed the rated capacity of the hoist or supporting structure.
- Ensure lifting paths are clear and exclusion zones are maintained.
- Use correct PPE: safety helmet, gloves, safety boots, and high-visibility clothing.
- Ensure periodic thorough inspections are carried out by a competent person.

Support and Maintenance

For service, inspection, and spare parts, contact your local Lifting Gear and Safety Depot

Depot List

Bristol: 0117 9714883

Avonmouth: 0117 9550456

Newport: 01633 334450

Port Talbot: 01639 540007

Pembroke: 01646 574000

Plymouth: 01752 474488

Fareham: 01329 550988

Redruth: 01209 703990