

SAFE USE OF TENSILE LOAD LINKS

Applies to: DML (Dillon), Straightpoint / Crosby, Tractel, and similar tensile load measuring links

Purpose

Tensile load links are designed to measure and monitor tensile forces in lifting, pulling, tensioning, and load-testing operations.

They are used in rigging systems, cranes, hoists, structural testing, and cable or rope tensioning to provide accurate load readings.

This leaflet provides guidance for safe operation to prevent overloading, dropped loads, inaccurate readings, or equipment failure.

Before Use

- Inspect the load link – Check body, eyes, threads, pins, shackles, and connectors for cracks, corrosion, deformation, or damage.
- Verify SWL (Safe Working Load) – The load link's rated capacity must exceed the maximum expected load.
- Check certification – Ensure the load link has a valid LOLER thorough examination certificate.
- Check calibration – Ensure the calibration certificate is in date and suitable for the accuracy required.
- Inspect pins and retainers – Ensure all load pins, circlips, split pins, or locking devices are fitted and secure.
- Check threads – Ensure threaded eyes or adaptors are clean, fully engaged, and tightened to manufacturer torque.
- Check display unit – For electronic links, inspect screen, buttons, antenna, and casing for damage.
- Check battery – Ensure batteries are fully charged and correctly fitted.
- Zero the load link – Power on and zero the unit with no load applied.
- Confirm alignment – Ensure the load link will be loaded in straight-line tension only.
- Ensure operator competence – Only trained and authorised personnel should use tensile load links.

During Operation

- Install in line – The load link must be installed centrally and in straight-line tension.
- Use correct connectors – Only use rated shackles, slings, or fittings compatible with the link.
- Apply load gradually – Increase load slowly and smoothly.
- Monitor readings – Continuously observe displayed load values.
- Maintain clear area – Keep all personnel clear of the loaded line and beneath suspended loads.
- Use correct communication – Apply standard signals or radios where visibility is restricted.
- Avoid shock loading – No snatch loads or sudden force application.
- Check for rotation – Stop if the load link begins to twist or bend.
- Confirm stability – Pause at low load to confirm correct seating and alignment.
- Record readings – Log peak loads where required for testing or certification.

Do Not

- Exceed the rated capacity of the load link.
- Side-load, bend, or twist the link.
- Use as a lifting point unless specifically designed and rated to do so.

- Use damaged, corroded, or out-of-calibration links.
- Modify pins, threads, or connectors.
- Use incorrect shackles, bolts, or adaptors.
- Subject the link to shock or impact loads.
- Submerge electronic units unless IP-rated.
- Leave a loaded system unattended.
- Use the load link to lift or support people.

After Use

- Remove all load and return the reading to zero.
- Power down electronic units.
- Wipe clean and dry all surfaces.
- Inspect for wear, deformation, or thread damage.
- Remove batteries if storing long-term.
- Tag out and report any defects immediately.
- Store in a clean, dry, padded case.
- Maintain calibration, load-test, and LOLER records.

Safety Reminders

- Always follow the manufacturer's operating instructions (DML, Straightpoint, Tractel, etc.).
- Conduct a risk assessment and lifting or tensioning plan before each operation.
- Never exceed rated capacity or use out-of-date calibration.
- 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, calibration, proof-load testing, 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