

## Safety

**Safety Alert Number 163 issue 12.10.2010**

### **Safe Use of 1 Tonne Ballast Bags**

Balfour Beatty Rail uses many one-tonne bags for the movement and delivery of loose materials such as shingle, ballast and assorted loose items. These bags, if used correctly provide a convenient way to move these types of materials in a safe manner. However, there have recently been instances of these bags failing and being used inappropriately.

These bags are lifting accessories and as such should be inspected when just clear of the ground to check for security of the spout and frayed/rotten base and lift eyes. They should also be inspected before use when being filled with material on site.

The recommended bags for use on Balfour Beatty Rail sites have a 'discharge spout' fitted to the base of the bag. The discharge spout is designed to allow the safe emptying of loose material from the bag without needing to go underneath it, nor to cut or tear the bag to release the load. This type of bag is designed to allow the person emptying the bag to do so from a safe distance by pulling the release cord.

The image to the right shows a one-tonne bag correctly lifted using a four leg chain with an operative standing in the correct location (away from the suspended load) operating the discharge spout from a safe distance.

An alternative to the four leg chains is a lifting beam shown below which has the benefits of substantially reduced load height and better control of swinging load while being moved.



**Operators and Crane Controllers must as part of their lifting operation ensure that these bags are checked and used correctly, ensuring that the load is kept at a minimum height and not over any personnel.**



**Display on Notice boards and brief to:**

No Brief Required  ALL Employees  Managers Only  Disciplines affected  Sub-Contractors

Alliance/JV Partners  All holders of track certs NWR/LU  Signed attendance sheets required

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