



READYPOWER

ENGINEERING LTD

NUMBER ONE FOR PLANT HIRE
OPERATED AND SELF DRIVE HIRE

Safety Bulletin No 58

Handling 4 point flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBC`s)

To: All Plant Operators

Network Rail's standard NR/L2/RMVP/0203 – "Specification for planning and undertaking lifting operations using on-track plant" is going to be amended from June 2011 to include a requirement that when handling, i.e. raising, lowering or suspending, 4 point Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBCs) with cranes or hoists an appropriate spreader bar fitted with safety hooks to prevent the hook from slipping of the loop shall be used.

Currently there are no instructions given in the standard regarding the handling of Flexible Intermediate Bulk Containers (FIBCs) when using cranes or hoists. There is a potential safety risk if FIBCs, also known as bulk bags or builders bags, with 4 point lifting loops are incorrectly lifted using chain slings that are not suitable for the purpose. When lifting FIBCs all the lifting loops must be in a vertical position such that no lateral forces are created in the FIBC. The use of chain slings or attaching all the loops to a single crane hook will invariably mean that a vertical position cannot be achieved and unacceptable loads will be generated in the FIBC.

The recommended method of lifting FIBCs by the FIBC Association is by use of an appropriate spreader bar fitted with safety hooks to prevent the loop slipping off the hook as shown in the photo below.



Example of Spreader Bar

Whilst the Network Rail standard being changed relates to on-track plant, best practice suggests that all lifts of FIBCs should be undertaken using a suitable spreader bar for the size of bag being moved.