Toolbox talk - Wire Rope Sling Safety

Wire rope slings are strong, flexible and somewhat resistant to heat. However, they are susceptible to damage from environmental conditions, kinking, cracking from small radius bends, etc. Be sure to inspect each sling inch by inch before using it.

- First, look for the permanently attached identification tag that states the size, grade, rated capacity and the name of the manufacturer. If the tag is missing, the sling is defective.
- Look for broken wires. If there are five or more broken wires in one rope lay, the sling is defective. If there are three or more broken wires in one strand of one rope lay, the sling is defective (a rope lay is the length along the rope where one strand makes a complete revolution around the rope). Some company policies state that a single broken wire renders the sling defective. Be sure that you know your company's wire rope sling policy. Carefully observe the areas of the wire rope that attach to fittings. If there are one or more broken wires in these areas, the sling is defective.
- Check the end connections including the thimbles for signs of damage.
- As you're inspecting the sling, watch for worn and abraded wires. Also look for kinking, signs of stretch, corrosion, rust, pitting, discoloration, unraveling (bird caging), strands that are separated from the rest of the wire rope, melted areas, burns or any other signs of damage.
- If any part of the sling is defective, take it out of service immediately and follow your company's procedure for handling defective equipment.