



March 13 — Improper Rigging Setup

I noticed the rigging shackles were upside down.
The rigging wasn't properly centered before lifting load. Shackles were being side loaded.
Unapproved lifting plates with no weight limit were being used to lift loads.

Turned shackles right side up and made sure rigging wasn't getting caught. Warned my supervisor of the lifting plates and side loaded shackles.

Improper rigging was identified prior to a lift. Shackles were installed upside down, the load was not centered, shackles were being side loaded, and lifting plates with no visible weight rating were being used.

Nothing had failed yet.

But lifting hardware is designed to carry load in a specific direction and within specific limits. When shackles are side loaded or misaligned, their capacity drops significantly. When lifting points are not rated, there is no confirmed limit to what they can safely support. A lift may look stable until the moment it isn't.

Rigging failures don't give warnings. They release stored energy instantly. And when steel falls, it does not negotiate.

This wasn't a knowledge issue. It was a verification issue. Someone assumed it would hold instead of confirming it would.

That assumption is where serious incidents begin.

Hazards

- Shackle failure due to side loading
- Sudden load shift
- Dropped load
- Crushing injury
- Fatal struck-by incident
- Structural damage

Stats

- Struck-by incidents remain a leading cause of serious injury in construction.
- Improper rigging and overloading are common contributors to lifting failures.
- Side loading can reduce shackle capacity significantly.
- Many lifting incidents occur during routine operations when procedures are bypassed.

Humans at Work

This is where it starts. "It ain't goin' anywhere." Give it a couple taps, looks lined up, nobody sees anything wrong. The load's sitting there. Nothing's moving. So the brain checks the box without really checking the details. That's assumption creeping in.

Then procedure drift takes over. The steps that used to matter like checking shackle orientation, confirming ratings, centering the load begin start feeling like extras. Not skipped on purpose. Just rushed. But rigging isn't about what looks steady before tension. It's about what's engineered to stay steady under load. A couple taps don't replace proper setup.

Pause and Think

- Are shackles installed correctly and aligned with the intended load path?
- Is the load balanced and centered before tension is applied?
- Are all lifting devices rated and approved for the weight being lifted?

Rigging is engineered, not guessed.
If you don't know the rating, you don't know the risk.
Alignment matters as much as capacity.