



## Hoist certification

**The issue of the validity and wording of the different types of certificates that are issued for hand powered lifting devices, which include chain blocks and lever hoists and commonly referred to as “hoists” often arise in the work place when audits or inspections are conducted.**

These certificates are commonly issued by persons or entities that supply, inspect and /or test this equipment.

Sadly, many of these certificates are badly, or incorrectly worded and if required as evidence in a court of law, would be declared invalid. Before we take a look at the wording and contents of

these certificates, we need to establish what the different types of certificates are, as well their purpose and legal compliance. Users must comply to the law and the hoists that they purchase and use, must conform to a specific quality standard.

For the purpose of this article, we will use the word hoist to include

chain blocks and lever hoists as defined in SANS 500 and included in DMR 18 as hand powered lifting devices.

Hoist Certificate types can be broadly categorized into the following:

### **Certificate of Inspection.**

This specifies, and details the results of a visual, external inspection, conducted by a trained and appointed inspector. This competent person, such as a LTI or LMI needs to be appointed, in writing, by the user. The inspection should be conducted in accordance with a proper detailed check list fully completed.

### **Certificate of Test**

This certifies, and details the results of an actual performance test, which is commonly referred to as a proof load, or test load, that was conducted on a specific type of hoist. This certificate must be issued by the OEM, Supplier or entity, such as a LME, that tested the machine, either after manufacturing,



assembling or during the actual service life of the machine, as specified in DMR 18 and SANS 500:2023.

### **Certificate of Conformance (not compliance)**

This certifies that the hoist was manufactured in accordance with a specific SANS or other International Standard, such as EN, DIN, JIS, BS or US Fed Spec. The number of the Standard referenced, must appear on the Certificate.

### **Certificate of Test and Conformance**

This certifies that the hoist was manufactured, and conforms to a specific International quality Standard and is then tested, by the OEM, Supplier or LME to a specific proof load, or test load, specified in the Standard, on a calibrated test rig.

### **Validity of certificates**

For the record, all hoists that are sold and distributed in the RSA are imported, mainly from Eastern Countries. These units are either completely chained up by the manufacturer overseas, and supplied to the user in sealed cartons, or the units are imported partly assembled and un chained. These hoists are then assembled locally and the hand and load chains are fitted. The units then have to be tested before dispatch to a user. This is to comply with DMR 18 (5), and should be conducted by registered LME/LMIs and a proper certificate of test must be issued.

The issue of the validity of mostly small sized printed certificates, often in a foreign language, that comes with a chain block or lever hoist in a sealed carton and then dispatched directly to the user, raises a serious legal issue in terms of the OHS Act. If we scrutinize DMR 18 (5) it requires testing by a LME/LMI “before they are put into use.....” Therefore, if these chained up units, in sealed boxes, are dispatched without being individually tested, they do not comply to the law, and are supplied illegally. A proper printed certificate of test, signed by a LMI on behalf of a LME, should be issued and supplied with the unit,



to the user. This is referred to as the “birth certificate” and it should be filed by the user, and be available for audits and inspections.

CE Mark relevance. It is necessary to note that if a hoist has a CE mark, which is normally stamped or marked on the identification plate, or printed in the hoists accompanying manual, the hoist has to be issued with a EU Declaration of Conformity. This document, referred to as a DOC, confirms and states that the hoist conforms with relevant EU Safety Standards. These documents are published as EC Machinery Directives, such as EC Directive 2006/42/EC which covers machinery, including hoists, for acceptance in EU countries. It is common in our country that many hoists that are distributed and marked CE, do not have operating manuals or are issued with a relevant DOC.

In conclusion, it is important to note that the onus is on the user to comply to the law and only use quality, certified and tested hoists. Unfortunately, there are importers and distributors who are not concerned about the quality of hoists that they supply, but only

in profits generated by volume of sales. If the user is not concerned about using proper good quality hoists, normally because of being more expensive to purchase, he or she must be aware that they are the responsible party that will face prosecution, should a failure result in damage to plant or equipment, or resulting injury.

Lastly, all certificates, such as inspection, test or conformance certificates must be filed and kept on record by the user and be available for scrutiny, for audit purposes or should any incidents occur.

At the end of the day, there is no substitute for safety and users must only purchase and use quality, branded, tested and properly certified hoists.

The contents of this article is the opinion of the writer only. It is supplied without prejudice or bias toward any party or persons and may not be used as factual whatsoever, should a dispute arise or in a court of law.

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