Webbing Slings — The EN 1492-1 Colour Code, Mode Factors and Retirement Criteria

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The colour-to-capacity code that makes a sling's WLL readable across the yard, how choke and basket hitches change capacity (mode factors), protection at edges, and the cut-stitch-chemical damage list that retires a sling on the spot — with the stocked EN 1492-1 sizes.

The colour is the capacity

Colour | WLL straight | Stocked |

Violet | 1 t | 1 m, 2 m, 3 m |

Green | 2 t | 2 m and siblings |

Yellow | 3 t | quoted per length from the 32-row range |

Grey | 4 t |

Red | 5 t — 2 m stocked |

Brown / Blue / Orange | 6 / 8 / 10 t and up |

EN 1492-1 fixes the colours and the label: material (polyester = blue label thread), WLL, length, standard — an unreadable label retires the sling as surely as a cut, because an unverifiable rating is no rating. Polyester stretches little (~3 % at WLL) and shrugs off most oils and moderate acids; it dislikes strong alkalis and sustained heat above ~100 °C.

Mode factors: the hitch changes the number

Straight (vertical): 1.0 × WLL.

Choke hitch: 0.8 × — the bight pinches the webbing; never seat the choke on a corner.

Basket, vertical legs: 2.0 × — both legs carry; the factor collapses toward 1.0 as the legs angle out (1.4 × at 45° legs is the usual table entry).

Edges demand protection: corner protectors or sleeves — a steel edge under load cuts webbing like a blade, and edge cuts are the number-one sling killer.

Retire on sight

Cut or abraded webbing exposing core yarns, torn stitching, knots (a knot can halve capacity), chemical stiffening or glazing from heat, illegible label — any one condemns the sling; they are destroyed, not downgraded, exactly like shackles. Rigging hardware pairs from the same stock: shackles sized so the pin fills the sling eye, wire-rope alternatives where edges and heat rule webbing out, and hoists above it all. Slings quote within 24 hours by WLL, length and count — certificates per EN 1492-1 stated on the paperwork.

Frequently asked questions
What do the colours on lifting slings mean?EN 1492-1 ties colour to straight-lift WLL: violet 1 t, green 2 t, yellow 3 t, grey 4 t, red 5 t, brown 6 t, blue 8 t, orange 10 t. The label still governs — colour is the yard-distance check, not the certificate.How much can a 2-tonne sling lift in a basket hitch?With both legs vertical, twice the WLL — 4 t for the green sling; at 45° leg angle the table drops it to about 1.4 × WLL. In choke, the same sling is derated to 0.8 × = 1.6 t.Why is a knot in a sling forbidden?A knot concentrates load across kinked fibres and can halve the sling's strength unpredictably — standards treat a knotted sling as damaged. Use shackles and the correct hitch instead of improvisation.When must a webbing sling be destroyed?On any cut or abrasion exposing core yarn, damaged stitching, heat glazing, chemical attack, or an illegible label. Inspection is before every use plus the site's periodic regime — and destroyed means cut up, so it cannot re-enter service.Webbing sling or round sling?Flat webbing grips loads and spreads pressure; endless round slings (same colour code) seat better in hooks and around irregular shapes and hide their load-bearing core inside a sleeve. Edge sensitivity and the retirement rules are common to both.

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