

Ceiling hoists and track systems

This alert highlights the risk of using ceiling tracks systems with incompatible fixed or portable ceiling hoists.

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Background

Ceiling hoists are commonly used in hospitals, aged care, disability care, aquatic centres and other facilities where people with mobility restrictions require lifting, handling or transfer from one location to another.

In a recent incident a person was injured when the ceiling hoist being used to relocate them fell. This incident occurred due to an incompatibility between the hoist's trolley unit roller diameter and a turntable mechanism forming part of the ceiling track system.

Ceiling hoists are comprised of a ceiling track system that is built into or fixed to the ceiling, a hoist, and a supporting frame (carry bar) to which the body support harness or suspension system is attached.

A trolley unit sits inside the internal running face of the ceiling track system and is connected to the top of the hoist through a slot in the underside of the track (see figure 1). The hoist raises the person and the trolley unit moves along the ceiling track via rollers to the desired point where the person is intended to be lowered.

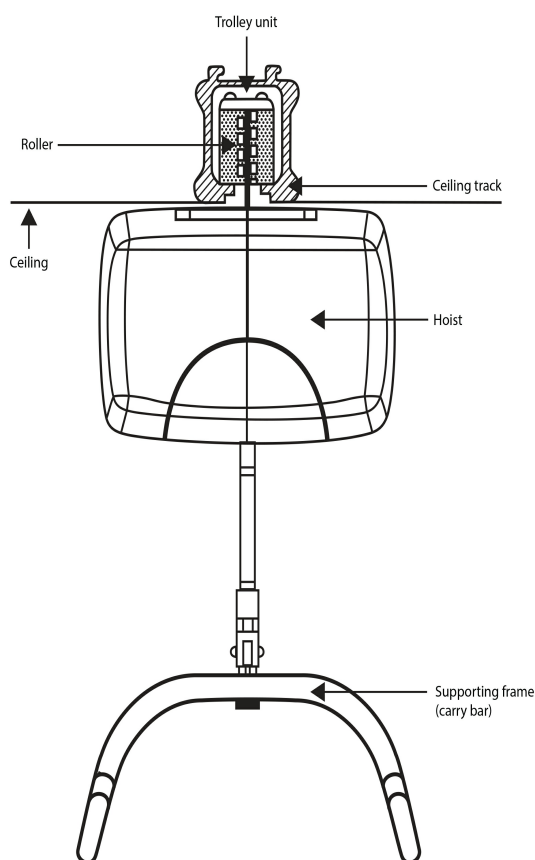


Figure 1: A typical ceiling hoist and track arrangement

Since there are a number of different manufacturers of ceiling track systems, hoists and associated components or mechanisms, there may be safety issues associated with using incompatible plant.

Using ceiling track systems with incompatible fixed or portable ceiling hoists may increase the risk of injury to persons using or being suspended from such hoists.

For example, a ceiling mounted turntable mechanism requires the trolley unit to be located in the turntable before it is rotated to align with a track going in a different direction. A guard rail prevents the trolley unit of a compatible hoist from falling while the turntable is in use. The trolley unit of an incompatible hoist may pass under the guard rail and fall due to the roller diameter being undersized relative to the internal running face of the ceiling track system.

Recommended controls

The risk of injury associated with the transfer of people using ceiling hoists and track systems can, for example, be controlled by ensuring:

- the make and model of the ceiling track systems used are compatible having regard to the manufacturers recommendations
- engineering controls, such as locking gate devices, are implemented to ensure that hoist trolley units will not inadvertently detach or roll off the ceiling track, and
- appropriate information, instruction, training and/or supervision is provided on the use of the hoist and ceiling track system and associated risks.

Further information

Other publications

AS/NZS ISO 10535 – *Hoists for the transfer of disabled persons – requirements and test methods*

Contact Details

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