

# Readers Letters



In response to our training article (page 55) in the April issue regarding a telehandler equipped with a work platform working with its tail protruding into a busy street, we had a call from Mark Clarke a health & safety consultant representing Frank Rodgers the contractor responsible. He told us that the photograph misrepresented the facts and did not show that a site supervisor was located on the opposite side of the telehandler and was guiding the youngsters around the back of the machine. He also said that it was not possible to put out any cones as it was too close to a busy side road. He also referred to the fact that the company has an exceptional safety record on this site and that it does take safety very seriously.

We agreed to publish his response and explanation of events and all of his written correspondence follows. While we respect that Frank Rodgers is a reputable company we are still unconvinced that it was not at fault in this case. The reader who took and sent us the photos is a safety professional and was totally shocked when he saw this and pulled over to take the photo. Clarke argues, perhaps validly, that if it was so dangerous the photographer should have ran over and intervened, rather than stand and take a photo - Perhaps? The fact is that the machine could have been properly cordoned off, or a different more compact machine used that was able to pull off the road?

**Leigh,**

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the article that was printed in last month's magazine on page 55 concerning Frank Rogers. As I discussed with you on the phone this photograph is a total false impression of the operation being taken at the time.

I have enclosed an email from Dean Rogers who is the son of Frank Rogers. Frank is recently deceased and Dean is the MD of the company.

The article in the magazine has caused a lot of problems for Frank Rogers from their client who is also mentioned in the article.

The client is now insisting that Dean Rogers ensures that their name be exonerated from any bad publicity and as well as publishing something in your

magazine the client who is mentioned in your magazine has asked for a letter from your organisation to clear their name.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**Mark Clarke MA CFIOSH MIIRSM CRSP**

**Leigh,**

Please find below a document from the Considerate Contractors which was issued to Frank Rogers. As you will see this is one of the highest awards to contractors within the Construction Industry. This is further evidence of the high standard of safety on this site where this distorted photograph was taken and sent to your magazine. If you require any further information please let me know.

Regards

**Mark Clarke.**



Dear Sir,

I very much appreciated your Comment in the latest Cranes & Access 'When is pricing predatory' I think if we are all honest with ourselves we would like to be able to discuss pricing with our competitors, not that it would be likely to work in this industry. I recall 'in the bad old days' when crane hirers used to get together at industry meetings the discussion of rates was one of the main subjects, that and crane driver's pay. And we did make agreements on pricing, but any such agreement would barely last a week before someone broke it and the whole thing would collapse with recriminations fired back and forth at the next meeting.

However most of us also recognise that any suggestion of such practices is just not even worth contemplating these days, just watch the faces at any association meeting if you even mention the word! It has almost become socially unacceptable ...like drink driving. BUT the laying down of some strong professional guidelines by associations like the CPA, IPAF and others, would be a good start. Other trades or professional bodies (lawyers, doctors etc ) do it in order to foster a professional and consistent approach by their members and if in doubt we can always cite the favorite excuse of the day "It is for Health and Safety reasons" after all as you say in your article changing equipment over mid contract can be construed as adding increased and unnecessary danger - Imagine how a site agent would feel if one of his men was killed while unloading or loading equipment during such a change over?

Perhaps we members should lobby our associations to draw up some solid codes of practice and then be prepared to strike off those who disregard them? I seem to recall reading somewhere that one of the scaffolding associations is starting to do something along those lines and suggesting that contractors should not employ non certified companies.

This was only meant to be a quick note. Just really wanted to say that I like the fact that you are prepared to speak out-we need more of that, especially in these difficult times, Keep up the good work.

**Name withheld on request**

*We asked this correspondent if we could publish the letter and attribute it, he agreed to publication but after saying yes to including his name called back and said " After reading my words over again better not put my name - you never know I might have the police around here investigating cartel plotting or old price fixing rings or something? "*

# Readers Letters



The following letter was in response to an accident in Turkmenistan in which a truck crane tipped and the beams then retracted/collapsed as the outrigger beam cylinder anchor points gave way pushing the beams out of the back of the boxes.

Hi Leigh,

Thanks for your response reference pins in legs! I would imagine that you found all mobile cranes have a simple pin system relying on the operator to use it!

I will say that the only mobile crane that I know of that doesn't rely on this both cheap and antiquated system is the Boecker truck crane (we run the only one in the UK) however this started life as an access platform which appears to be an industry that has always successfully relied upon lock valves! (I can't ever remember seeing a picture of an access platform in the same sort of predicament)

Just another observation! How efficient are the authorities in dealing promptly in Taiwan when a crane tips over! Not that I'm saying that were not! You have to wonder if such prompt action was to be taken in the UK if careless oversights/ accidents would be reduced.

Regards,

Neil Berry, Berry Crane, Towcester, UK.

The Taipei reference refers to the fact that when a tower crane collapsed in Taipei in April, the District Prosecutors Office and police immediately arrested the six people that made up the crane team, including an engineer, the team leader, a crane operator and three other workers from the crane operations team - only releasing them later after eight hours of interrogation and following the posting of bail of between NT\$100,000 (\$3,000) and NT\$500,000 (\$15,000). It also issued a fairly comprehensive report of what went wrong within 24 hours and announced a hefty fine on the construction company.



The accident that prompted the letter

Dear Sir,

Please keep my company, my name and my email details confidential -

I am only reporting this for your general information.

We supplied PSS Lifting with our traffic management services back in mid Jan 2009 and we shall never work for them ever again as we are left with unpaid bills and threatening letters. I am only telling you this because had I known what I have read since on your website about Lee Rowe and his company I would have given them a wide berth and avoided the cost and hassle of dealing with this disgraceful business from day one.

Name and details withheld on request.

We have in this case decided to take the cautious route and have deleted the references to the company and its co owner. In spite of the fact that we have satisfied ourselves that the complaint is totally valid and simply mirrors the experiences of many other suppliers in the crane and access business. We have highlighted the antics of this company or rather companies - the name changes slightly every couple of years or so - in this publication before and repeating individual complaints may look like persecution and that is not our role. What it does highlight is the need for an information exchange on such companies. We are planning to host a free seminar at Vertical Days by a company that is building a database such as this for the construction and allied industries.

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