

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read the letter in your latest issue from Andrew Seddon covering what he seems to think is discrimination against lorry loaders. Or rather he seems to be looking to balance the argument against mobile crane hirers who moan about the crane hire/contract lift rules that just don't seem to apply to lorry loaders. In his letter he rightly points out that mobile cranes have the advantage in that they can use red diesel and are not subjected to the tough MOT tests that the vehicles under a lorry loader are required to go through.

My family runs both mobile cranes and a number of transport lorries, including a flat bed with a Hiab on it. Mr Seddon is right in saying that it is not right that the massive cranes we run are not subject to the same tough tests as our transport fleet. This will, I know not make me popular with other crane hirers let alone my fellow directors. One thing we do agree here though is that we never want to send a crane out that is a danger to other road users and we do work hard to make sure that it doesn't happen. We are not set up though to handle the sort of brake testing that the transport vehicles have to go through and the test centres can't handle the axle weights that our cranes have.

If the law was changed to force us all to put the cranes through the same tests as normal HGVs either the test centres would have to gear up for it or crane manufacturers would? A legal requirement with a proper lead in time would force the issue and ensure that the cranes on the road were as roadworthy as other commercial vehicles.

If you publish this letter it might be best if you did not put my name under it as I don't think it will endear me to those I have to work with.

From a UK crane rental professional.

*Our correspondent might be surprised at the reaction he would get. Talking to crane company owners at the CPA crane interest group meeting in September, a number of them seemed to think that the time had come for some sort of road worthiness test to be obligatory for mobile cranes. We would appreciate hearing from more of you on this subject. Ed*

Dear Sir,

The article in your October magazine about halving the accident rate by implementing some basic rules concerning outrigger use caught my attention.

I thought that it grossly over simplified the reality of the situation and was very opinionated and pointed. Please do not misunderstand me I thought it hit on some very key issues and hammered them home in a very effective manner. I just think that such a belligerent piece which insinuated personal knowledge of the subject should have carried the name of the author.

Having said this and with the risk of looking like a hypocrite, I am of the opinion that it will prove a useful document in our efforts to get this message across to some of our managers and operators. And would like to copy and circulate it to those managers with responsibility for areas where such equipment is used, mainly concrete pumps and mobile cranes. To this end would you have any objection to our copying this document and circulating to around 30 of our staff? Or if I might be so bold, would you be open to sending it to us as a PDF that we could print copies from? We would be open to covering any reasonable administrative costs that doing so might incur.

Regards

**Stuart Purcell**

*Company name withheld from publication at correspondents request.*

*This article was intended to be simplistic in its look at the subject and was written by our publisher Leigh Sparrow who has a tendency towards putting excess emotion into such a piece if more subtle methods do not seem to be working. It was his decision not to be credited with the authorship of the piece. We have had at least a dozen other readers made the same point on the authorship and he now acknowledges that it should have been there. We have responded to Mr Purcell stating that we are happy for the article to be copied and have forwarded a print resolution PDF. If anyone else would like to do the same please do not hesitate to contact us or feel free to download the PDF from our digital edition on line at [www.vertikal.net](http://www.vertikal.net).*

Ed

Hi Leigh,

Rather than submit below as a comment against an article I wonder if you could make a general point that probably should be aired to a wider audience - I am sure you could get the point across far better than I could and would prefer if there was no connection to myself or xxxxxx.

I have just read the web article "Up a ladder on thin ice."

While I appreciate that people will take photos of unsafe practices and report them in an effort to highlight such unsafe practices and humiliate those concerned, I have to ask.... the person taking the effort of getting out his/her camera, taking the photo and sending to [vertikal.net](http://vertikal.net) .... are they really showing their concern for safe practice? ...what action did he/she take to prevent the guy from injuring himself? Why did they not offer to hold the ladder or find someone else to do so? What about their moral duty of care for self and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions?

I feel wherever possible we should be actively promoting safe practices and encourage all to offer support and assistance, not just laugh at bad practice or others ignorance. We should be challenging bad practice, have that "difficult conversation" in a calm and sensible manner and hopefully make the guy on the ladder, or the store manager realise the potential dangers and how they can easily be avoided.

After all it is the season of good will to our fellow man

Best wishes and compliments of the season

Regards

**Chris**

*Full name and company withheld as requested.*

*Chris makes a very good point which we share totally, however the sending of 'Death Wish' photos to Vertikal.Net is not mutually exclusive to following the more involved approach suggested in the letter. The photos rarely show faces or identify companies, although we feel that there is no reason why they should not... especially when it involves a large contractor who publicly expounds a safety culture with membership of all the right associations etc.. We all know that even some of the largest companies who demand all sorts of paperwork and certification at the gate as part of their box ticking method of health and safety, then look to save a few dollars by choosing the cheapest rental company regardless of its safety record and push rates down to the point where it becomes virtually impossible to provide the quality of service that ensures a safe workplace. Getting back to the subject....we do know that many of our Death Wish contributors also approach the 'culprits' after taking their pictures and are more often than not met with an abusive - 'mind your own business' - response, although not always. We have published examples where those using the dodgy access equipment have said they know it is not particularly safe, but that their employer will not 'spend the money or take the time to do it right'. Or in some rare cases employers have responded very positively and changed the way they work... sadly this is a tiny minority. However.... Chris' point is no less valuable for some of these experiences.. a positive approach to someone like our man up the ladder is always worth the effort and ought to be something that all of us in the access business do as routine.. it can after all help spread the word about safe and efficient access equipment and that is what we all need to do.*

Ed

Dear Sir,

Rob Wilkin pointed me towards the current editorial on your web site which suggested you may like comments from the perspective of a harness manufacturer / supplier.

The issue of belts against full body harnesses for restraint is a long standing debate. As a manufacturer SpanSet took a stand a long time ago to promote full body harnesses for restraint in boom lifts and advise against the use of belts (The "belt" being defined as a belt on its own rather than one incorporated into a harness).

The reasoning behind this especially in the light of the fact that we manufactured / supplied both was that:

- Used correctly both harnesses and belts were effective for use in work restraint systems
- To understand and use a work restraint system effectively training is required
- A trained user should be able to cope with a harness or belt
- Full body harnesses support workers better than belts should the worker become suspended
- The potential issues requiring a work restraint system in a boom lift include the catapult effect, but also include issues where the platform tilts or inverts
- A full body harness is more appropriate to provide the necessary support for all the potential issues that may occur in a boom lift

The editorial does raise some excellent points however that are often missed.

It is well understood by the majority of users (due to a lot of work by IPAF and others over many years) that the use of a work restraint system is the best practice in a boom lift platform. There are still unfortunately some who avoid or ignore this and how we bring them along is a challenge to be addressed as I fail to see how they have missed the campaigns so far.

It is important that those unloading or moving machines around understand that they also need to use protection when in the platform. This is a time when the machine is potentially not in its planned working environment and so may be more likely to encounter problems.

Additionally, quite a common problem I see are users converted to harness and lanyard use, but who have clearly missed the point. Rather than as the editorial suggests using a "short lanyard" or the other option of an adjustable lanyard shortened for the particular machine, they use a full length lanyard. In the case of a catapult effect they might be stopped from hitting the floor, but at best they would be remote from the platform and may have received quite an impact before the lanyard stopped them.

Finally the continual evolution of harnesses is our focus, but with a little training most users currently become pretty proficient in their use and fitting. Without this training however they also miss out on the education that helps them understand why they are using it and it is this that helps change a harness and lanyard into an effective solution.

Regards,  
Pete Ward  
Height Safety  
Manager

*This letter was received as a response to an editorial we ran on our web site which argued that for some specific applications involving the short use of a platform, such as for a demonstration at an exhibition and for delivery drivers unloading or loading boom lifts on site approving the use of a belt type harness with short lanyard as an alternative to a full body harness we might achieve a far higher usage level than we currently do. We have also run a poll alongside that editorial that is roughly running around 80 to 90 percent in favour of the belts for such specific applications – However there has also been a number of readers who have said that approving belts could lead to their wider use by those working from platforms regularly which as Mr Ward points out would be detrimental in cases of extreme platform tilt etc....*

#### Correction:

*We published a letter in our last issue from Paul Markham on behalf of the Temporary Works Forum, regarding the outrigger article that we carried in the October issue. A chart that he had included was incorrectly transposed when converted to print. Here it is as it should have appeared.*

## Proposed method for safe use of cranes

Appointed Person (AP) inspects Job, prepares outline Lift Plan and calculates outrigger point load (in TONNES) using Software or Chart from Crane Supplier.

*Suitable software includes:  
Licon, Cranimax or Spreadsheet from the Crane Supplier.*

Contractor Arranges for foundation design -  
a. Size of foundation  
b. Spreaders of suitable strength and stiffness

*Design by a Competent Engineer.*

AP completes lift plan incorporating foundation/spreader requirements

Contractor/Crane Supplier to liaise and arrange for load spreaders to be on site

*Could be timbers, load spreaders by site, alimats or steel pads from the crane supplier, as determined by the Competent Engineer.*

Crane and load spreading equipment to site.  
Before crane sets up main/principal contractor to sign permit to lift



**Hello Mark**

Your article in the Nov 2010 issue, which I just received - is great.

As I am supposed to be a competent person - I have had intensive training for 3 months in the USA in 1979 with the American Hoist, Bantam, Lorain and Grove cranes and worked for many years in the Gulf, covering all Gulf States as a test engineer for cranes, what you say about competency is very true.

I can also confirm what you say, that there are engineers who do the inspections for cranes, with very little knowledge of cranes. Even some of those who are working for big name companies.

I also liked very much the letter from Simon Ellis. What he said about the complications of all terrains is also very true. The electronics are so complicated - we really do not have the right people who can do the repairs. Often, we have to get technicians from Europe to help us fix the electronic faults. Imagine how long it takes!!!!!!

One of my friends had to wait few days with a boom fully out as he could not retract it until the technician arrived from Europe. We also have the same story with the contractors who just would accept the new sophisticated cranes.

Myself I also have a 25 ton Kato year 1990 ex-Ainscough - it is really one of the best cranes you can have with very little problems.

I should also mention that site with the news - Vertikal .Net - particularly for various accidents that happen every month. It is very good looking at all these accidents and definitely help everybody to be more careful and to try to avoid similar accidents.

Wishing you all the best - you can publish this if you find it good enough.

With best regards

Eng. Yousef Mousa, General Manager

Yousef Mousa Cranes Co.

Amman - JORDAN

**Latest opinion Surveys**

In December and the start of January we have been running a survey of our online readers, asking:

Should personnel that carry out Thorough Examinations of lifting equipment - in-house or third party - be independently certified as competent?

**As of January 11th**

268 people had voted

86.6% said Yes

13.4% said No

This is probably the most polarised result we have ever had in a survey, they normally tend to be more balanced with 60/40 being typical.

The survey will remain in place for at least another.

**The survey for October/November asked the question:**

Should the use of belt type harnesses be sanctioned for use in certain circumstances such as short exhibition demonstrations and for third party truck drivers when loading?

**When the poll closed**

221 people had voted

55.6% said Yes

44.4% said No

**The big freeze brings out the poets**

The winter came early in Europe this year with heavy snowfall in many parts, the UK in particular was badly hit with many crane rental companies stuck with a yard full of cranes and with no sign of when the roads might

be cleared. The big freeze encouraged some desperate crane hire companies with time on their hands to get poetic and draft their own versions of popular songs. Here are two sent to us by Sam Jessop of Walkers Cranes and one from Peterborough.

**To the music of Winter Wonderland:**

My phones ring  
Are you listening  
In the lane  
Snow is glistening  
A beautiful sight  
Means crane hire blight  
Walkers Cranes from Tuxford  
Understand!  
  
All the Hires have been deferred  
And the new hires tomorrow  
unheard  
But before long  
We'll sing a new song  
Walkers Cranes from Tuxford  
Understand!

In the site yard we can grease  
the main boom  
Check the oil and tyres, clean  
it down  
Ready for the crane hire jobs  
to resume  
And we can do the jobs around  
the town  
  
Later on  
If you want hire  
Walkers are  
Your main supplier  
If you are delayed  
From the plans that you've made  
Walkers Cranes from Tuxford  
Understand!  
  
*A tad commercial perhaps but  
what the ....*

**This one to the music of Buddy Holly's Its Raining in my Heart**

The Sun's not out  
The cranes not too  
And all there is for me to view  
Yellow cranes. . . .  
Standing in my yard  
  
The weather man  
Says more snow to come  
No wonder why I feel so glum  
There's no craning  
No craning from my yard  
  
No money No moneyeee  
What's going to become of meee  
I tell myself that it will go  
But now we're forecast much  
more snow

So no Crane work  
They're sitting in my yard  
  
Pit a patta Pit a patta  
Pit a patta Pit a patta  
Pit a patta Pit a patta pit  
Just no craning  
They're sitting in my yard  
  
Oh let it go  
Let it go-oh  
I'm just fed up with this snow-oh  
If I could feel that it will change  
Then I wouldn't feel so very  
strange  
Cos it's still snowing  
They're standing in my yard  
Yes it's snowing  
Cranes standing in the yard





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