

Readers Letters

c&a

letters

Dear Mark,

Just a brief note to stress my agreement regarding your comment in the latest Cranes & Access on manufacturers responsibilities regarding fitting of devices such as anti-crushing systems.

I have exactly the same frustrations regarding security of machines. Surely the manufacturers should be working in tandem with IPAF regarding keycard security systems. The biggest daily problem on virtually every job site now is preventing unauthorized people using machines. Damages, minor accidents, straight forward theft could all be prevented if the manufacturers and IPAF stepped forward.

I believe that options offered by rental companies are just masking over the problem. We are supposed to be developing the industry and driving it into the next generation of users.

Time to step up!

Well done on the editorial.

A UK rental company owner who at the time of going to press had still not come back to us with approval to use his name.

Hi Leigh,

Although I am no longer working in the industry, I still read through Vertikal most days to see what is happening. Being so involved in IPAF for such a long time, I take special note of items published concerning developments there. I was surprised that the coverage of Europlatform was pretty sparse compared to say the early meetings in Basel or Maastricht. For example, I was unaware of the 'consolidator debate' until I read your separate and well-argued opinion piece accompanying an on-line poll. For what it is worth, while I expect to see continued mergers in Europe in the next few years, I don't expect to see the US companies get involved here in the short term or a 1997-1999 type consolidation process in the EU.

But my main reason for writing today is that I expected to see some coverage of the first US IPAF Convention, and haven't seen it yet – perhaps it is being prepared. No topic has been more hotly debated at Council in recent years than the 'US experiment' as some like to call it. The fact that IPAF has been able to organise its first ever national convention in the US is notable. A truly international federation without US involvement is hard to imagine. My opinion, always easier to proclaim in hindsight, is that the UK model of a training-centric organisation has been an impediment to success in North America. While training cannot be ignored, a global federation dedicated to the safe and effective use of PA can and must be more than this. Hopefully this convention is a sign that this corner has now been turned.

Regards,

Steve Shaghnessy

Steve Shaghnessy makes a fair point, and sadly the first IPAF safety conference in the USA conflicted with other events, including close proximity to another US based conference, which we were already committed to, making it virtually impossible to send any editorial staff. We did highlight the conference in advance on Vertikal.Net, but were unable to provide a full report on it in the magazine. Another factor is space limitations - a constant issue for us, thanks to a verbose editorial team among other things. We already differ from almost all other publications in that we have maintained our page count throughout the downturn and run a far higher editorial to advertising ratio than is normal. Interesting subjects raised at conferences, such as Europlatform are not necessarily lost if not covered immediately, we often cover them in greater detail at a later date, addressing the subject more fully in a specific feature or article. In the meantime the points made are valid and we have duly noted them and will strive to improve.

LWS

Platforms suspended from cranes

Hi Leigh,

I just wanted to point out how the regulations in Europe are interpreted differently. As we are no longer allowed to work dangling from cranes, somehow this is good safe practice in Germany (and even advertised as such!).

Please see Construction Europe, Volume 22, No 9 (Nov. 2011) p 27 where it shows a dam under repair and a concrete bucket and platform are combined to repair the wall of the dam.

This is not the first instance where I have seen such discrepancies. One day a few years ago when the A270 suspension bridge was being built in Bremen, there were four men, with no lanyards or safety belts (Although Hi-Viz vests and hard hats were worn) were up a JLG 1200 inspecting one of the towers (no camera with me at the time). I guess one could have seen them falling down and located them quicker and if they fell on their heads their brains might not have been quite as mushed up - more contained sort-of-speak.

Claude R. Dubé

SALTA Engineering GmbH,

Yorckstraße 5, D-27755 Delmenhorst



We responded to Mr Dubé without the benefit of seeing the item he referred to. We have now checked out the article which is an editorial photo of a section of shoring/formwork around six metres high with a walkway/platform on top for the concrete workers. However one man is standing in the guard railed 'riding platform' attached to the concrete bucket and intended for that purpose. The bucket is of course suspended from a crane... thus his reference to "dangling from a crane". Man platforms suspended from cranes have of course recently been 'outlawed' by the FEM, unless no alternative method is possible. So the production of crane suspended concrete buckets with riding platforms indicate that double standards apply.

Hi Leigh,

I don't have a problem if you use my name. I think, like in the General Aviation industry, we MUST have the same interpretation of the rules, no matter where we are in the EU. When I worked in Canada and the USA, we were always told the rules were harmonized and the same applied to everyone in the EU, but when I arrived here (10 years ago this month) to work I found out that it was mostly lip service as we (in North America) know nothing and it was easy to tell us everyone else's interpretation.

Best regards,

Claude

Re: Crane falls at Tate Modern

A couple of things stick out like a sore thumb regarding this incident, yes that job was really a 160 tonne job, plain to see I'm sure that will have to come out.

The 70 city being used in the recovery has the dolly block on, which if I recall correctly is only good for 6.8t, I haven't checked the spec but I'll be surprised if there's any more SWL than that in it. If so then why's it on there? Because looking at the boom angle he's probably up to near 6.8t at that radius!!! Scary!!!!

So it's totally the wrong crane for the job, looks like its got a 3 tonne 3 metre sling lobbed round the jib cradled (6t SWL) any old style, waiting to slip or just be cut by the steel gussets on the boom etc..., but an even more scary scenario still awaits seeing as they've got an ad-hoc and unsuitable crane on the boom which is just balancing on the steelwork. Then when the superstructure of the crane being rescued decides to slew round - following the ballast - which will be looking to find gravity (I've seen that before), could be a lovely shock-loading and then double Tate Crane Carnage, just to add to the mix they've got three people in shiny hi-viz vests right where I imagine a runaway 110t crane boom which is trying to find the floor would more than likely go, then we have personal injury at best.... Fatality at worst.

Also it is apparent that the bigger crane attached to the front would have been useless if the scenario above would have unfolded, it is waiting for the other one to get the 110 up past its own centre of gravity, which I'm sure would have needed much more than a 6 ton line pull.

This really stinks and makes a real mockery of the time and care we all put into making sure our jobs are carried out safely, just look at what this does for the entire industry it sets us back 20 years.

Once again thanks for your time on this, can you keep my name out of it as I'm not in it to score points, I just feel strongly that this is unacceptable.

A UK crane hire professional

We thought long and hard about publishing this letter, it refers to the recovery of a 110 tonne mobile crane that tipped over at the Tate Modern gallery M2 extension at the start of December. We were deluged by correspondence stating that the job would have benefited from a larger crane due to the long radii involved. Crane people will all look at a job differently of course and all we can say at this stage is that only those involved know all the facts.

As to the recovery it is again dangerous to make comments from a distance. The correspondent is though a much respected and highly experienced crane man and was close to the job at the time. His comments are genuinely felt and he has clearly taken time out of a busy schedule in order to alert to us all in the industry to the fact that we need to raise our game. Thankfully in this incident there were no injuries or fatalities. It could though have easily been a different story both in the first instance and during the recovery.



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**Vertikal
days**

Dear Leigh,

Please have a look at the attached article, it is a major publicity from the Health and Safety Board of Québec called CSST made two to three years ago and they sent this everywhere so people are aware of the problem. If you look at the picture 001 and expend the picture pay attention at the base of the lift cylinder and you will be capable to see that the anchor plate where the scissor stack is connected as broke off from the base structure.

We also had a few accidents one with a boom over 100ft about four to five years ago and the unit was working sideways and the centre pivot pin on the undercarriage broke and the unit flipped over a building killing the person. If I am not mistaken – the unit was almost at its maximum height. Same thing with another boom up in the Sept-iles region of Québec when a pin from a boom cylinder snapped and the person died from this accident. This is the reason why the CSA (Canadian regulation) did implement the regulation mentioned on my previous email. There is a cost to inspection but I believe it is still cheaper than losing a person's life.

That regulation is really strict and has the law behind it so the owner or the person responsible for the machine will be prosecuted for a criminal act that can result in a jail sentence. Until a few years ago it was impossible to sue a person but now it is more strict and people do think twice. Under the Government of Canada the CSA is to mandate for each province to follow the rules and the inspector of the province has full authority to seal a machine and issue a fine, and not a \$50 one - rather thousands of dollars.

It is really strict and I believe other countries should follow

the same principal – we are talking about peoples life here and not a sand bag.

The article referred to is a Canadian safety warning regarding a structural failure on a number of scissor lifts, some of which caused fatalities or serious injuries. It says that in all cases the accidents were due to poor or non-existent maintenance and inspections. It warns owners that it is a legal requirement to carry out regular inspections and maintenance as per the manufacturers' recommendations. It then gives an example of the regular checks required, daily, every 200 hours and once a year.

It also highlights the legal requirement to have all platforms thoroughly inspected by a qualified engineer after 10 years of service and then every five years thereafter or after a serious incident or sale.

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Death Wish 2011

Here are a few selections from our Death Wish series..... All have been sent in by our eagle eyed readers during 2011. You can win a copy of the book *Going up in the World* by Denis Ashworth by sending us your views explaining which of the photographs here is the best example of a Death Wish.

Send all entries to The Vertikal Press, box 4998, Brackley, NN13 5WY, UK or in Germany to Vertikal Verlag, Sundgaullee 15, Freiburg D-79114

