

Readers Letters

c&a

letters



Wrong type of Medical

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my disbelief of how good our industry is every now and then seemingly "standing in a bucket and trying to lift itself up by the handle"! With over thirty years experience in the crane hire and heavy construction industry I am well aware of the importance of health and safety and how our industry is better for it. What I fail to see however is why certain construction companies deem it necessary to install a requirement for all personnel attending their sites to be in possession of a medical carried out within a two or three year period (depending on the individual company's criteria).

My problem doesn't relate to the request, it's probably not a bad idea, though not indicative of one's ongoing health and wellbeing. What does amaze me though is this, a full medical, including the apparently highlighted areas of sight and hearing required by a critical worker, must be carried out to obtain or renew a H.G.V class 2 driving license required by UK law for crane operators aged 45 or over. Why then should this medical, that satisfies current government DVLA licensing, and please correct me if I'm wrong, to ensure drivers of this licensing category are fit and able to safely operate these vehicles, not be good enough for our own construction industry requirements? Who deems this legality as insufficient and on what grounds not withstanding ("well it's company policy") are these demands made?

If any worker attending these particular sites doesn't have a medical, meeting the date criteria then fair enough one should be obtained, but why should an extra one be required if a perfectly adequate one required by law is already in place? Dare I suggest that common sense should prevail in this situation. If an H.G.V. medical has been passed and a license issued within the two or three year time frame of the site requirement, surely that should be acknowledged. The crane hire industry has become increasingly difficult to draw new personnel into, many companies are constantly trying to recruit good operators.

When one with a perfectly good, in date medical, is turned away from site and the instruction to "send another one" is issued, I wonder where this alternative operator is lurking? (If anybody knows please get in touch).

I hold an H.G.V. license and have undergone full medicals by a G.P. to satisfy the DVLA requirement when renewing it. In case any of the companies insisting on these "extra" medicals are interested, I can assure them the examinations are thorough, stringent and conclusive. They include blood pressure tests, urine samples, sight tests, hearing tests, reflex reactions, balance, height and weight statistics and all manner of health and well-being conditions and questions. What on earth does the construction industry know that the medical profession doesn't?

Thanks for your time

S. Ellis

Ellis Crane Hire

We totally agree - there is far too much of this 'not invented here syndrome' in the UK construction industry, where each company looks to have its own tests, criteria or mandatory quality standard. None of which makes the site a safer or better quality place of work. On a similar but different area, rental companies increasingly feel obliged to obtain - and pay for - several different supplier quality approval standards, rather than simply requiring that of the certification company.

Getting back to the letter, one would think that a medical that meets legal government standards for driving a large truck on the road, would be perfectly acceptable. The sad fact is that all this disparate certification - some of it simply to cover backsides - carries a substantial cost which is all too often not passed on by rental companies to the contractors that dream them up and demand them. Perhaps if it was they would be more rational and pragmatic?

If you have a view on this please do write and tell us.

The following letter relates the article we published last month on timber mats for cranes and trackways. The correspondent is from the industry and a specialist in the provision of timber mats. As with many articles on specialist subjects, opinions and views can creep in although in this case it seems we might have found the right balance

Dear Leigh

Interesting article!

But a slightly biased point of view it has to be said. I have had plenty of 'duff' tropical Hardwood mats/Timbers in my time and my fathers time for that matter. I had some terrible Greenheart once and that is meant to be the crème de la crème of hardwood timber!

The thing about oak is that it moves with climate/temperature change, the fissures/cracks open AND close. They very rarely rot and fungus only appears with a lack of air. All mats should be stacked to allow free air flow between them, especially if they are being stored for a long time (and I wouldn't be doing my job if they were)

Will be interesting to see any comments to the article, if anyone bothers?

Anyway, speak anon

Best regards

On balance the writer thought that withholding his name would be the better option for the sake of diplomacy.

What is the world coming to?

The following letter is a response to our attempt to find the positive in the recent EU referendum vote in the UK and the election in the US.

Leigh,

It is always a pleasure for me to read your editorial. Now, no doubt it must have been related to what is happening in the USA. I would like to share your optimism but after what we have seen and heard in this campaign it is really difficult to believe it is going to be a good presidency. Dangerous buffoon and ignorant takes the reins of the world power like USA winning by saying what people want to hear. Unfortunately, this trend we see in other countries - see Hungary, see us - what a government we are having at the moment, Brexit, Le Pen... For us being a neighbour of Mr. Putin and having an unstable Defence Minister that breaks off relations with allies is very precarious....

Current situation does not yet have impact on our business, fortunately we are slowly building our position on the local lifting market, still looking forward to the future and hoping for the expansion in..... United Europe .

Zpозdrowieniami / Best regards,

Katarzyna Damer

Poland

Genie nicely

I just wanted to write you in relation to the article on Genie in Cranes & Access magazine which was excellent, it brought back lots of memories and recollections of what was a great company. I also take note of your positive - or is it optimistic? - comments on the celebrations and how you felt the company had regained its mojo!! I assume that this means you thought they had lost it even though you appear to hedge your bets, and do not explain why and on what grounds! You are probably correct in that life under Terex has not always been a smooth ride, that's obvious to anyone that deals with them like I do. I certainly hope that your view on the future is accurate and you are not simply looking through rose tinted glasses. I could go on but maybe its best I don't, so will stop while I am ahead. So nice job I really enjoyed reading it and you can't say that about too many trade mag articles. Keep up the good work.

Sam Snead

Wichita

We very much appreciate letters such as this. Mr Snead did not state what company he worked for or even clarify whether he was a supplier, customer or whatever. No matter comments - positive or critical - are very much appreciated all the same. If you like or dislike anything in Cranes & Access please do write and tell us.

John Jennings 1945-2016

UK rental industry veteran John Jennings passed away in early November, following two years of ill health, he was 71. Jennings was a director and former chairman of Coventry-based Clements Plant & Access Hire, he retired last year as his cancer became harder to live with and as part of the hand-over process sold his stake in the business that he had founded and then managed under different ownerships for almost 40 years.

John Jennings was born near Shipston on Stour, Warwickshire, and spent his formative years in Stratford on Avon, joining the locally based International Harvester dealer - Lumley Saville - as an apprentice in the publicity department, launching what was to become a life-long involvement in the equipment business. In the mid 1960's he joined Coventry-based rental company Sterling Plant, which became the first company to offer tool hire in the city.

In the late 1970's he and a colleague set-up a new business based in Rugby - Alljay Tool Hire - which they built up into

a solid business over many years, eventually selling the company to local property developer, the Deeley group in 1990. Deeley merged it with Clements Plant - which it had owned since 1967 - renaming the merged entity Clements Alljay. Jennings remained with the business and was appointed managing director of what was essential the hire division within the Deeley group. The company expanded into the self-propelled access market in 1996 with the acquisition of Thumb-a-Lift of Leamington Spa, and then in January 2007 Jennings led a Management Buy Out with his new business partner Jim Longstaff.

Jennings was also a founder member of the UK-based Hire Association of Europe and became the last of the founding members to have an involvement in the industry. He eventually retired due to ill-health in May last year, just before his 70th birthday. Since then he has retained an involvement with the business, often spending time in the office to hear how things were going.

Over the years he contributed many specialist articles for industry magazines, and sat on several committees including the IPAF Council, and the HAE. He also worked with manufacturers



John Jennings

to provide a rental-company perspective for their product development. His private passions included photography, steam trains, the finer things in life and most important of all his family. He leaves behind three daughters and eight grandchildren. His family was with him as his long and fruitful life came to an end.

John Jennings was not everyone's cup of tea, he would not suffer fools gladly had a certain orneriest to him at times, especially when he passionately disagreed about something, this made him an

admirable IPAF committee member and possibly the bane of committee chairmen? However he was always straight forward, genuine, exceptionally knowledgeable and from our experience fair and straightforward.

He certainly qualifies as an 'industry character' and will be missed by a great many in the access and UK rental business, most of all by the team at Clements of course. Our hearts go out to them and his family.

The funeral was scheduled for Friday 25th of November.