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Hydraulic component test bed

Pressurising hydraulics for diagnostic purposes

In 2015 a rental company employee company suffered fatal injuries whilst pressurising a hydraulic component in order to diagnose a leak. As an outcome to the incident, the CPA was tasked by the Coroner's Office to inform its members of the dangers of this activity and what procedures should be in place to prevent an occurrence.

In particular, the CPA was asked to promote the availability of the Health and Safety Executive published guidance note GS4 - Safety Requirements for Pressure Testing. The guidance details the hazards and risks of pressure testing, how failures can occur and the actions that need to be taken, including determining the risks, preparing a written safe system of work, segregating the item under test and maintaining the integrity of test connectors.

The CPA recognised that the dangers of hydraulic pressure testing extend beyond the construction-equipment maintenance sector, and that there was a need to direct CPA members to specialist organisations which can provide a service for this activity. The CPA therefore approached the British Fluid Power Association (BFPA) which has both the expertise and a number of educational publications and courses on fluid power components. It was agreed that a specific document would be produced, based on GS4. The new document will be tailored to the construction equipment sector, and will direct readers to a number of other documents dealing with the use and maintenance of pressure systems and equipment.

Development work on the document is currently underway and the completed document is expected to be available as a free-of-charge download from the CPA website in late spring.

In the meantime, the CPA encourages employers who may undertake this activity to acquire Guidance Note GS4 which can be downloaded as a free leaflet from the guidance and publications section within the HSE website at www.hse.gov.uk



HSE GS4 Guidance



Lifting Technician Apprenticeship

The new Lifting Technician Apprenticeship is aimed at both new and upskilling employees who will operate tower, crawler or mobile cranes and undertake slinging and signalling duties. It has been devised by an employer development group consisting of crane owners and contractors, including CPA members, with the lead employer being Laing O'Rourke. After much work and many meetings, the standard and the assessment plan has been approved by government and the group are now working towards preparing the apprenticeship for delivery.

The final stage in the process is to quantify and attain the requisite level of funding to support the training and assessment costs to employers. 15 funding bands have been set by government (through the Skills Funding Agency - SFA) and range from £1,500 up to £27,000 per apprentice. The group's submission, supported by three quotes from training providers, sought funding at the highest band. This reflected the high cost of crane training due to overheads such as crane hire, supporting personnel and the large range of resources required, and further reflected the stipulated 20 percent minimum off-the-job training requirement.

SFA have not yet approved the requested funding band. Further intensive work is being undertaken by the lead employer and the group to challenge the SFA. The group has further devised a supporting training syllabus, training logbook and work experience logbook, which the CPA will host and make available as a free download on its website.



Executive Hire Show

The association has once again exhibited at the Executive Hire Show in Coventry and held an Open Meeting within the exhibition centre. The event was used to promote its 'Stars of the Future' award scheme for apprentices in the equipment rental industry held in conjunction with a number of colleges offering training for equipment mechanics.

The Open Meeting topics include the finalised work on Reducing Unintended Movement of Plant, and updated guidance being produced on Lifting Operations with Excavators. Guidance on the dangers of pressurising hydraulic components for diagnostic purposes, were also discussed along with how to mitigate the effects of this activity. There was also an update on the new Trailblazer apprenticeships and finally an update on CITB's new grant offer for the industry, and the consensus process.

