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Readers

Letters



Good afternoon Leigh/Mark,

Following receipt of the latest Cranes & Access magazine I came across an article which highlighted a key issue within our industry. So outraged by this article I now find myself writing to you with the following comments.

The piece was written by ALLMI and discusses the stability of a lorry loader crane using an old outdated test standard to make its point. It states the criteria for stability of a lorry loader crane. However, what it does not define is when it becomes unstable, perhaps the answer to this is when the vehicle is on its side?

The piece makes no definition as to what constitutes a lorry loader, we run both mobile cranes and lorry loaders within our fleet, lorry loaders with capacities of up to 99t/m. These are not builders merchants cranes and are very technical in their own right. The standard needs revising to take in to account the size of cranes that are being manufactured and the way that we and others now use them for more technical applications.

Stability is a fine line that can be crossed very easily with the working moment of such cranes and for ALLMI to post such a piece is wholly unprofessional. I suspect that many crane operators that read this piece will be cutting it out and laminating it for that 'just in case occasion'.

If stabilisers are permitted to lift, which members of the COG would allow such a vehicle to continue to operate whilst working on one of their sites with its stabilisers two feet from the ground? As the article does not define how far stabilisers can lift would ALLMI like to confirm this for those of us that operate such equipment?

Lorry loaders have come a long way since the birth of builders merchants vehicles and I attach a link to show just how far they have come:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5xLC8FS-6k>

Whilst the UK still remains behind the rest of Europe the UK market is developing and cranes are increasing in size due to the varied type of work that they undertake and the loads that are being moved. The test standards in the UK must develop to allow for these larger cranes and factor in both duty and performance, stability must be further defined to limit any interpretation. The item has left more questions unanswered than answered but worse has injected doubt in to the very basis of stability calculations. I am truly incensed by this piece and I feel that ALLMI should be held to comment.

Your correspondent states to claim the differences between mobile cranes and lorry loaders and having operated both of them on our fleet we understand those differences. My question to you is does ALLMI?

Finally I would like to ask one more question: When is a crane not a crane and how close is the line between stability and failure?

I agree that lorry loader cranes are fitted with stabilisers and that vehicle chassis are designed to flex but how far are they to be pushed before a fatal accident occurs due to failure. Furthermore, the lorry loader crane is fitted to a sub-frame that takes the torsional stresses and flex away from the chassis and strengthens the vehicle whilst holding the three major components together, crane, body and chassis. The question over duty cycle has to be raised as a vehicle with extreme levels of torsion/twist and flex must have a sub-frame designed to withstand the load moment and support the flexibility of the OEM chassis without exceeding its yield strength.

Best Regards

Daniel Drury

Director Lifting & Movement Solutions

While we appreciate the right of Mr Drury to have his view and are happy to publish it, we think his might be missing the point and being overly harsh over what is a brief summary to bring attention to the new guidance and not the definitive document or full guidance. The whole point of regular features such as the ALLMI Focus is to raise awareness to the issues and the work that ALLMI is doing and to alert readers to any new guidance and useful information that the association produces. The article on stability and leg deployment, clearly stated that the ALLMI Technical Guidance Committee has updated its guidance and also that it now references BS EN12999.

Without going over the entire article it clearly states that full copies of the new guidance can be obtained from the association.

We also published an abbreviated version of a letter sent to ALLMI members on this subject highlighting aspects of BS/EN12999. In the summary it makes the point that given the flexible chassis of a modern road going truck it is not unusual for the rear stabiliser of a loader to lift, well within the limit of stability of the crane. And this on its own does not indicate instability. This is something that is also shared widely with truck mounted lift manufacturers. And while mobile cranes are built with stiffer heavier chassis, designed primarily as a load bearing structure, it not unusual for them also to lift a leg while operating safely within the cranes load chart. This is particularly true of classic truck cranes such as the three axle 25 tonners that were once so popular in Europe and still dominate the Chinese market.

The whole point of ALLMI publishing new guidance is aimed at trying to clarify this stabiliser lifting issue in order to try and avoid confusion on site. While it is perfectly right for those working alongside a loader crane to flag the fact that the stabiliser leg has lifted, just in case the crane really is being overloaded, it is also important that they understand that this may be an operating characteristic of the machine at that radius and that it is perfectly safe.

We fully agree with Mr Drury that the question of duty cycle work's effect on the truck structure is something that needs to be raised. And we also appreciate him raising the issue as more discussion is good?

Leigh

In no particular order - JOST 158s with a 50 metre jib have an out of service radius of 10 metres, the Potain Luffer is Chinese and not for sale in Europe, surely that is critical information? The Jost has 10.9 bolts not 8's and the connection between jib section one and two has doubled the number of connections so it is four times as strong as it used to be.

Customers failing to put cranes in free slew was the problem. Xxxxxxxx have never had a Jost issue so this is not self-protection it is truth. The heaviest load we have to lift to erect a JOST 158 is 5.43 tonnes not over

10 tonnes as per your disappointingly inaccurate article, in summary a very disappointingly poor and badly researched article. Very poor is all I can say.

We did not have permission of the letter writer to use his name before going to press, and have therefore left it out. He did not request anonymity and was simply writing to reprimand us for publishing what he felt was a misleading article. While his comments are painful we appreciate his views and take them fully on board.

Dear Leigh,

I am writing to you concerning the article "Potain hydraulic crane", Page 8 from the latest issue of cranes & access. Within it I noticed a paragraph that contained some misleading information about Jost Cranes.

"The new machine is aimed at the market previously served by Jost and more recently the Wolff 166B. The Jost JTL 158.6 was highly popular until it started losing its jib in high winds on high profile sites."

This leaves the impression that we no longer are active in the market and that our crane structures are faulty and unstable. First of all Jost Cranes is still very active in the UK market and our crane sales have been growing by approximately 12% year on year for the last four years. I believe that we still by far are the number one provider for hydraulic luffing cranes in the UK.

Second and more importantly, our JTL 158.6 cranes were losing their jibs because in each single case the crane operator put the crane in out-of-service with the slewing brakes on. With a locked slewing brake and the high winds attacking the jib NO crane would withstand the forces and fail at some point.

This happened on four occasions and the HSE could prove all cases have been operator failure. Having said this I am kindly asking you to publish a rectification notice in your next issue.

A statement like the one in your magazine can cause considerable damage to our reputation. I appreciate your understanding of the situation.

Please give us your thoughts.

Thank you.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen / Kind regards

Alexander Jost

On receipt of this letter we immediately acknowledged it, as is our policy, gave him our thoughts and agreed to publish this letter in full.

In double checking the points mentioned in letter, we have received concrete information that clearly indicates that not all of four the cranes were left in out of service mode with the slew brake on as claimed. The HSE has not stated that this was the case and information supplied suggests that at least two were in the required free slew state when the incidents occurred. This indicates that the situation is not as clear-cut as suggested. In addition, a modification to reinforce the jibs at the point of failure was issued. The feedback since then is the crane with the modifications is now exceptionally strong - possibly overdesigned which is very reassuring.

We are though more than happy to make sure that Jost's view and specific points are published and also to state that it was not at all our intention to suggest that the company had vanished, just point out how successful its machines had been in driving this market forward, and that since the series of unfortunate events, sales of hydraulic luffers in general have slumped. It is clear from a couple of other correspondents that the Jost hydraulic luffers continue to sell to a considerably greater extent than we might have appreciated and that the companies operating them are very happy with them which his good to hear.

Good Morning

Lifterz are trying to find ways of providing low emission big capacity, high reach scissor lifts for trades such as pipe fitters and sprinkler contractors who need to get to 20m plus in a closed environment.

We have invested heavily in battery power but this is flawed for a few reasons, one being that Holland Lift and PB fit three phase 415v chargers as standard in Europe whilst we have to find ways of making do with 110v. Our inferior methods of charging with very limited power actually shortens battery life because the charge cycle is never really completed correctly.

We are also using diesel machines with filters but this is a very primitive solution which needs weekly filter changes at a parts cost of £70 each plus labour in going out to site to change and also the expensive threat of pressure build up in engines reducing engine life.

So, what about biodiesel? We are looking into this and would appreciate any advice you can give us.

Secondly, what I ask you guys is: is there is any reason why safe charging zones on sites cannot be installed providing power points that can give 240v or 415v?

Your thoughts would be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Malcolm Bowers

Lifterz

This letter was sent to IPAF and the Vertikal Press and we will be looking into this subject for the next issue of the magazine which will include a feature on batteries for scissor lifts. So if any readers have input on this subject we would be delighted to hear from you.

Tudor Van Hampton 1977 – 2017

Tudor Van Hampton construction equipment journalist and a managing editor at the prestigious Engineering News Record passed away on February 4th having been diagnosed with an inoperable Glioblastoma Multiforme brain tumour last March.



He began his career in 2000 with the US access and lifting magazine Lift Equipment and quickly went on to become editor in chief, before moving to ENR at the end of 2002. He was a first class, highly professional journalist and wrote some exceptional articles on the crane industry, including an in depth investigation into a spate of major crane accidents, including the fatal tower crane collapse in New York in 2008, for which he became a fully certified tower crane operator through the NCCCO programme. He was a true professional in everything he did.

Above all Tudor van Hampton was an exceptional person, a class act, intelligent, considered, kind, generous, funny and a joy to spend time with. A modest individual he had a great sense of humour, his laugh and his smile would light up the most tedious of press trips. He truly loved life and had a passion for, music, bad jokes, good company, classic cars and trucks - providing freelance articles to the Automobiles section of The New York Times - and the theatre.

He leaves behind his beloved wife and soul mate Jenie and their six year old daughter Jordan whom he doted on. The world and the industry has lost a truly remarkable person.