

# GGR opens a 'Centre of Excellence'

GGR-UNIC has opened the first CPCS-accredited testing centre at its Thame HQ for the new A66 operator training category for compact cranes under 10 tonnes. The testing centre has been designed and built to comply with the new guidelines and provides state of the art facilities for theory and practical assessment. The new centre will also offer permanent online testing facilities for anyone wishing to take the CSCS Health and Safety 'touch screen' test, which is a mandatory requirement for all individuals requiring any form of operator card issued by ConstructionSkills.

The centre will also provide a range of compact crane training courses tailored to the needs of the individual from novice to experienced operator.

Each course will aim to equip trainees with sufficient skills and knowledge for them to pass the CPCS Technical Test in the compact crane category. The A66 category was added to the list of CPCS operator training categories on 1st August and provides the first

nationally recognised, competence-based operators card for compact cranes.

GGR-UNIC managing director Gill Riley said: "We've worked closely with MCG and ConstructionSkills to help develop the new training category and a lot of effort has gone into making sure our training and testing centre is a centre of excellence within the industry. Mini cranes are user-friendly machines,



C&a

training

GGR training manager Kevin Fairholm (L) with CPCS monitor John Landers outside the new centre



The online testing facilities for the CSCS Health and Safety 'touch screen' test.

but there are inherent dangers in all lifting operations. Safety has always been our number one priority and the new training scheme will ensure anyone operating a mini crane has been thoroughly trained and tested."

The centre will also offer training for operators of vacuum lifting equipment in conjunction with compact cranes.

## When training does not work

Construction company William Birch & Sons of Link Road Court, Osbaldwick has been fined £12,500 plus and £15 victim surcharge for an accident in which two men were thrown out of the basket of a 3.5 tonne truck mounted aerial lift, leaving one man, Chris Cook, 44, in a coma for a month - this in spite of having trained the operator.

The accident happened in Bootham road York in August 2007, when the men were working on the brickwork at the first-floor level, the knuckle of the Niftylift truck mount they were using, was extended out into the road, there was no attempt to cordon-off the working area.

As a result a passing truck clipped the boom catapulting both men to the ground. Neither men were wearing a harness.

An off-duty police officer passing the scene shortly before the crash was so appalled by the lack of cones and warning

bollards round the aerial lift that he described it to investigators as "an accident waiting to happen". Another witness said that prior to the accident a van swerved to avoid the lifts boom, causing it to career onto the wrong side of the road narrowly missing another vehicle.

Paul Robinson, prosecuting for the Health and Safety Executive said: "Had the vehicle's owners, William Birch, provided its operator with a checklist of safety procedures to carry out, including a risk assessment, the accident could have been prevented."

The company said it had provided training for the lift operator, Karl Thackrah, 37, and provided safety equipment to control traffic round the vehicle. The company pleaded guilty to not ensuring Cook's safety. Managing director Chris Birch said afterwards: "This has been a deeply regrettable incident for a long-established family business with an otherwise excellent safety record. Lessons have been learned to ensure that this will not happen again."

Thackrah of Pottery Lane, York, denied an offence of not ensuring Cook's safety and elected to go for trial by jury. His case was adjourned for committal proceedings.



## Council in court for lack of training

The Health and Safety Executive is taking Plymouth City Council to court following the death of an employee while using a forklift as a work platform in February last year. It is prosecuting the council for five breaches of Health and Safety regulations including failing to ensure the safety of employees and failing to provide proper training.

Rory Littlely, 22, had been standing on the raised forks of the forklift so he could reach and untie wheelie bins stored on the back of a truck. The forklift lurched forward and he was crushed between the truck and the forklift. A coroner's inquest returned a finding of death by misadventure. Plymouth City Council has entered no plea to the five charges and the case has gone to trial.

### Who trained him then?

A man cleaning gutters out on a five storey building in Oranienburg near Berlin has clearly not been trained in the best equipment for the job.





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