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*The scene of the Benidorm incident*



# RETURNING TO TRAINING AND COMPETENCE...

As with tower cranes, working mastclimbers and hoists tend to be located where they are in full view of the general public - great for showing off a new method of carrying out construction and maintenance/renovation tasks but in full sight whenever there is a major problem or incident...and over the past few years there have been a few.

**In the same way that an aircraft is probably the safest form of travel, mastclimbers and hoists when properly managed provide a very safe and efficient method of lifting and working at height with very few incidents, while not blocking out the whole building façade or providing thieves with easier access to upper floors.**

However, when there is a serious incident they tend to be noticed from the street and widely reported in the general press.

## **BENIDORM FATALITIES**

Unfortunately, one such incident occurred in April this year when a twin masted mastclimber collapsed in Benidorm, Spain, resulting in two deaths. The two men, one 26 and the other 45, were apparently working on the finishing touches to an 18 month façade renovation project at Building 2 of the Principado Europa tourist apartment block on Calle Ibiza. Both had been trained in the safe use of mastclimbing work platforms.

The third man, who not only survived but was unhurt, had reportedly started to dismantle the mastclimber from the top and was left hanging from his harness/lanyard on the 13th floor of the 18 storey building. Fortunately, he was able to climb into an apartment once a window was opened.

According to a witness, the two men were

working between the eighth and 11th floors at the time and were raising the platform when the incident occurred. Two investigations are currently in progress to determine if there is any criminal liability, including manslaughter or non-compliance with safety regulations and the second to look at whether the contractor has complied with all current regulations, standards, including regular inspection and testing.



*The lower mast end*



*The higher of the two masts*

## **But why do such incidents occur on an inherently safe form of access?**

Is it a lack of training, lack of experience or lack of competence? Both men who died were, we understand, fully trained in the safe use of the equipment, but what about the survivor? And if you are trained are you competent?

Rupert Douglas-Jones, training manager at the construction division of Alimak in the UK says that the biggest competence challenge is not creating

the training but agreeing what good training looks like.

"The industry may broadly agree that competence matters," he says. "The harder question is whether we agree on what evidence is needed before someone is trusted to work safely, or to train others."

## **A SHARED GOAL, BUT NOT A SHARED REALITY**

"The construction hoist industry has become increasingly international. Equipment is supplied across borders, projects bring together multinational workforces and customers often expect the same standard of support wherever they operate. At first glance, that should make competence easier to define. We have standards, guidance, manuals, product information and training materials. Yet the reality is more complicated. The industry may share the same broad ambition, but it does not always share the same expectations of what competence should look like."

"This is where the real challenge begins. It is not enough to say that training is important - the industry has said that for years - the more useful discussion is whether training is being understood,



*Rupert Douglas-Jones*

delivered and assessed consistently enough to give employers, users and manufacturers confidence that people can do the job safely and correctly."

### TRAINING IS NOT COMPETENCE

One reason the subject becomes difficult is that training and competence are often treated as though they are the same thing. Training is an input - competence is an outcome.

"A person can attend a course and still not be competent," says Douglas-Jones. "Equally, a person may have many years of experience and still have knowledge gaps, poor habits or outdated working practices. Competence requires evidence and that evidence may include knowledge, practical skill, experience, assessment, supervision and the ability to apply the correct judgement in real working conditions."

"This distinction matters because different organisations, sectors and regions place different weight on each part of that evidence. Some expect extensive practical instruction and formal assessment. Others accept more limited evidence, such as online learning, self-declaration, workplace sign-off or local employer approval. Those approaches may all have developed for understandable local reasons. However, they do not all provide the same level of assurance."

### DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS IN DIFFERENT MARKETS



Across the global industry, expectations can vary widely. In some markets, formal training and independent assessment are seen as essential. In others, training may be viewed as optional, expensive or secondary to experience on site.

"There are places where employers actively seek structured training because they recognise the value of safer operation, fewer incidents, better maintenance and reduced downtime. There are also places where the value of training is still not fully accepted. That has to be said carefully, but it cannot be ignored."

"If a market does not place enough value on training, assessment or evidence of competence, the result is not just a different administrative approach. It can affect how machines are used, how faults are identified, how maintenance is carried out and how risk is managed."

"The uncomfortable truth is that attitudes to safety, cost and responsibility are not the



same everywhere. Economic pressure, weak enforcement, local custom and different views of liability can all influence what customers are willing to pay for, and what they believe is necessary."

"That does not mean the industry should name and shame regions or organisations. It means we should be honest about the problem: a certificate, a short course or a claim of experience does not always mean the same thing in every market."

### WHO IS COMPETENT

Perhaps the most difficult question is not how we train operators, installers or technicians but how we decide who is competent to train them. In some parts of the industry, becoming an instructor can involve practical experience, mentoring, observation, formal assessment and ongoing review. In other areas, the route may be much lighter, with a stronger reliance on online learning, supplied training materials or self-certification.

This raises an important question for any safety-critical industry: how much evidence should be required before somebody is trusted to train others?

"It is possible to discuss this without naming specific countries, manufacturers or schemes. The issue is not one organisation, the issue is the principle. If an instructor has never demonstrated practical competence on the equipment, has not been observed delivering training and has not been assessed in a realistic environment, what confidence should the industry have in the competence of the people they go on to train? That question may be uncomfortable, but it is central to any serious discussion about competence."

### THE MANUFACTURER HAS A SPECIFIC ROLE

Manufacturers have a particular responsibility in this discussion. They are not the only voice, and they should not claim to be. Industry bodies, employers, regulators and training providers also have important roles to play.

However, manufacturers bring something distinct. They understand how the equipment is designed to work, how components interact, how safety systems are intended to function and how inspection and maintenance should be carried out to keep machines operating as designed.

That knowledge is not abstract. It is directly linked



to safe use, reliability and machine condition. A construction hoist that is operated incorrectly, inspected poorly or maintained outside the manufacturer's requirements is less likely to perform as intended. That can affect safety, availability and the life of the equipment.

For manufacturers, supporting competence is therefore both a responsibility and a practical necessity. It is in everyone's interest that machines are installed, operated, inspected and maintained correctly. It protects users, supports employers and helps ensure equipment continues to work safely and reliably throughout its service life.

This is where manufacturer-led training, technical documentation, product familiarisation and competence pathways can add real value. They do not replace wider industry schemes but complement them by adding detailed product knowledge and practical understanding that only the manufacturer can provide.



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## ADAPTING WITHOUT LOWERING THE STANDARD

"The aim should not be to have identical training everywhere. That is unrealistic and, in some cases, unhelpful. Different countries have different regulations, languages, site conditions, workforce structures and commercial pressures."

"The better aim is consistent outcomes. People may reach competence through different routes, but the outcome should still be clear. An operator should understand how to use the equipment safely. An installer should understand the correct sequence, checks and limits of their role. A technician should understand the components, systems and maintenance requirements relevant to the equipment. An instructor should be able to demonstrate not only knowledge, but the ability to teach and assess others properly."

"That distinction is important. Training may need to be translated, examples may need to be localised, and delivery may need to reflect local regulations. But the core competence requirements should remain strong enough to protect people, equipment and the reputation of the industry."

## BUILDING A COMMON LANGUAGE

One of the most useful things the mastclimber and hoist industry can do is build a clearer common language around competence. Terms such as trained, qualified, authorised, experienced and competent are often used interchangeably, but they do not always mean the same thing. If employers, training providers, manufacturers and



customers use the same words in different ways, misunderstandings are inevitable.

A common language does not solve every problem, but it gives the industry a better starting point. It helps define what evidence is needed, what assessment should include and what level of assurance is expected before someone is allowed to operate, install, maintain or train others.

## A MORE HONEST CONVERSATION

"The industry does not need another article saying training is important," he adds. "It needs a more honest conversation about what competence means in practice, how it is evidenced and why expectations still vary so widely. That conversation should not be about criticising individual countries, manufacturers or training

bodies. It should be about recognising that one industry is operating across many realities."

"If the industry wants to improve safety and consistency, it has to face those differences directly. The answer is not to impose one rigid model everywhere. The answer is to agree on the outcomes that matter, strengthen the evidence needed to prove competence and make sure local adaptation does not become an excuse for lower assurance. In a global industry, competence cannot simply be assumed. It has to be defined, taught, assessed and maintained. That is the hard part. It is also where manufacturers, industry bodies, employers and training providers have the greatest opportunity to make a meaningful difference." ■

# ALIMAK AND BROGAN ACTIVE IN THE MARKET

**At the end of last year, Swedish mastclimber and hoist manufacturer Alimak and UK based rental company Brogan group signed a partnership agreement for Brogan to supply Alimak with its CAS aluminium common hoist towers and Atlas loading gantry systems, which Alimak will offer for sale or rent throughout its global sales and rental network. Brogan acquired common tower manufacturer CAS - Construction Access Systems - in June 2025. The towers are typically used on high rise projects to centralise multiple hoist installations serving a single access point or level.**

Atlas loading gantry systems are designed for use on low rise applications as an alternative to scaffold gantry set ups, particularly where tie-in points are limited or where large components need to be installed. They are currently in demand for projects such as data centre construction.



*An Atlas loading gantry*

# GEDA LAUNCHES WIND TURBINE HOIST

German access and hoist manufacturer Geda has introduced the SH 250 W, a battery powered rack & pinion hoist/elevator system for wind turbine towers, intended for transporting personnel and materials to the nacelle and intermediate levels. The SH 250 W is designed for heights of up to 210 metres and uses a lithium-ion battery pack. It includes online remote maintenance, a touchscreen display as well as a fault diagnostic system.

Tower deflection and mechanical stresses increase as wind turbine heights increase. At a tower height of around 200 metres for example, deflections of up to two metres in either direction can occur, taking conventional rope lifts to their maximum technical limit. Tower vibrations can also cause ropes to strike internal structures, become damaged or entangled. Replacement intervals and maintenance work can also lead to downtime. Furthermore, the safety rope cannot be fully inspected before it reaches the upper part of the tower.

One advantage of Geda's rack & pinion hoist drive is that it can be used from the installation phase, unlike conventional rope lifts, which are typically only put into service once the tower has been fully erected and inspected. The Geda lift uses ladder sections with rack & pinion guide profiles that start at ground level and are extended as the tower is built.

The hoist can be moved using a dedicated frame in either an upright or horizontal position and erected inside the tower using a collapsible tubular frame. The SH 250 W base mechanism has also been designed to be detached from the guide system and removed from the transport frame if, at any time, it needs servicing or replacement.



## TRANSPORT PLATFORM



## CONSTRUCTION HOISTS

GP **Mast climbing work platform**

GE **Persons and material hoist**

GPT **Transport platform**

GM **Material hoist**

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# ALIMAK'S NEW LIGHT RANGE

Swedish mastclimber and hoist manufacturer Alimak has launched a new lighter product range, the Alimak 350, based on its 350mm x 350mm mast system. It includes three base products: the Medius 350 construction hoist, the Vectio 350 transport platform and the Opus 350 mastclimber, with all three products using the same mast system and accessories, meaning that the same components can be used across multiple applications. Equipment can be redeployed easily between projects, while the need for additional parts and systems is reduced.

For rental companies and contractors managing multiple sites, this results in more efficient fleet utilisation and simplifies logistics. The 350 range is also compatible with previous Alimak products, allowing existing mast systems and accessories to be used.

*The Medius 350 construction hoist has a capacity of 1,000kg*



The Medius 350 construction hoist has a capacity of 1,000kg and a load platform of 1.4 metres wide, 1.5 metres long and 2.2 metres high. Maximum speed is 24 metres a minute and maximum lift height is 100 metres. Each mast section is 1.508 metres long.

The Vectio 350 personnel and material transport platform is available in six sizes ranging from 500kg to 2,000kg capacity and is aimed at small and medium sized construction projects with restricted space. Speed varies from 10 to 24 metres per minute, and it has a platform size from one to 3.2 metres wide and 1.5 to 4.4 metres long.

The Opus 350 mastclimber - available in single and twin mast configurations - is suited for classic façade work and space constrained projects. It has a lift capacity of 1,440kg to 2,830kg, a width of 1.2 to 2.2 metres and length from 3.7 to 25.6 metres. Maximum lift speed is 8.4 metres per minute. Maximum lift height is 150 metres with seven metre tie distances.



*The Vectio 350 personnel and material transport platform is available in six sizes ranging from 500kg to 2,000kg capacity*

*The Opus 350 mastclimber*



# A NEW NAME IN MASTCLIMBERS

A new manufacturer on the wider export market is Turkish company Maksan Lift, which will exhibit at Vertikal Days in September. The company has been designing and building mastclimbers, personnel and material construction hoists and industrial elevators for almost 30 years, mostly serving the domestic and regional markets, and now has a 20,000 square metre production facility. Its products are used on residential, commercial, high-rise and industrial projects. It also claims to operate the first and only IPAF approved mastclimber training centre in Turkey and the wider Middle East.

Its MKS Spider series of rack and pinion mastclimbers has capacities up to 1,500kg for a single mast and 3,000kg for a twin mast configuration. Speeds range from six to 12 metres a minute, and maximum height is 350 metres.

Its latest Spider is the MKS2026-4023 mastclimber available in single or twin mast configurations with a working height of 66 metres, while platform lengths of up to 29.6 metres are available with maximum capacities of 1,000kg/1,850kg in single/twin mast modes. Lift speed is eight metres per minute.



*The MKS Spider mastclimbers have capacities up to 3,000kg for a twin mast configuration*



*The Maksan facility in Turkey*



*A Maksan hoist*

The MKS Acrobat range of personnel and material hoists has capacities from 300kg to 5,000kg and lift speeds from eight to 90 metres per minute. Maximum lift height is 350 metres.

The latest product in the range is the MKS2026-4002 hoist with a maximum lift height of 46.5 metres, 40 metres per minute lift speed, 2,400kg capacity and an internal platform size of three metres by 1.45 metres wide and two metres high. All the major components - reducer, motor and electromagnetic motor brake - are made in Turkey. The mast measures 560 x 560mm by 1.51 metres long and is made from 60mm diameter steel pipe.

# RAXTAR'S 'BRAVE' NEW TRANSPORT PLATFORM

Dutch construction hoist specialist Raxtar's latest new product is an 850kg transport platform - the RX850TP - one of its new 'Brave' series of transport platforms. The new model's load platform is 1.7 metres long with an overall width of 1.42 metres and an internal height of 2.26 metres, with lift speeds of 12 or 24 metres a minute. The mast sections are 1.5 metres in length and weigh 47.5kg each and can be assembled to a maximum lift height of 100 metres.

Power comes from a 3kW 400 volt motor, requiring a minimum 16 amp three phase connection. The unit features PLC controls with touchscreen interface and push button operation. Standard features include installation and drop test controls, cable basket and galvanised/powder coated finish. Optional equipment includes an overload detection system, automatic greasing, programmable landings, intelligent hoist calling system and bluetooth communication.

Established in 1993 and based in Veldhoven, Raxtar designs, manufactures and supplies construction hoists and transport platforms. In 2014, Chinese manufacturer Zoomlion acquired "a significant stake" - said to be 35 percent - in Raxtar, and in 2016 the company established its own operation in North America.



*Raxtar's latest new product is the 850kg transport platform RX850TP*

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Spider Lifts  
23m - 37m



Telehandlers  
2,500kg - 4,500kg



Vertical Mast Lifts  
5.82m - 11.2m

**ZOOMLION**

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