

SAFETY ALERT

Working Around Suspended Loads

Many of our member companies agree that there are high risks for serious injury if a suspended load should fall during pipe making operations. OSHA has the following to say about suspended loads and crane operation:

OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.179(n)(3)(vi) states, "The employer shall require that the operator avoid carrying loads over people." This is required to protect people from the hazard of a falling load due to inadvertent failure of the crane mechanism or operator error.

To assist you in making sure you are not faced with a serious accident or injury at your facilities, the following are some tips for you to consider at your plant:

- We all know that a suspended load can come from a crane, forklift or even jib hoists. But don't forget that the strong back, forklift mast and forks or even the sling can be a suspended load. When someone stands under any of these items they are at risk of injury.
- It is best to have a 10' foot rule. This requires that no one is allowed to be within 10 feet of the area in which the load would fall if a failure occurred.
- For overhead cranes, look at installing remote controls to allow operation and movement of the crane from a safe distance.
- Establish specific hand signals for operators and employees and make sure everyone at your plant understands what they mean.
- If you need to go inside a jacket to open or close a gate, rest the load on a stand or jacks rather than depending on the crane or forks.
- Make sure that the load rating for slings, chains or straps are equal to the rating of the crane, jib or forklift. If not, always limit the load to the lowest rated part of the lifting system.
- Always place the forklift forks, strong back or slings down to the ground when not in use, even when they do not carry a load.

Here are some suggestions for moving loads:

- Guard against shock loading by taking up the slack in the load slowly. Apply power cautiously to prevent jerking at the beginning of the lift, and accelerate or decelerate slowly.
- Check the tension on the sling. Raise the load a few inches, stop, and check for proper balance and that all items are clear of the path of travel. Never allow anyone to ride on the hood or load.
- Keep all personnel clear while the load is being raised, moved, or lowered. Crane or hoist operators should watch the load at all times when it is in motion.

Finally, obey the following "nevers:"

- Never allow more than one person to control a lift or give signals to a crane or hoist operator except to warn of a hazardous situation.
- Never raise the load more than necessary, or leave the load suspended in the air.
- Never allow anyone to work under a suspended load.

REMEMBER- ACCIDENTS WITH SUSPENDED LOADS ARE OFTEN SERIOUS, SOMETIMES FATAL. DO NOT LET YOUR EMPLOYEES STAND UNDER ONE!!

For more information on this topic contact the OSHA web site at www.osha.gov.