

In the line of fire lifting operations

What's the risk?

Depending on the activity lifting operations can put people at great risk of injury and cause extensive physical damage to buildings and the environment when they go wrong.

Sometimes this can be due to people, vehicles and plant being beneath or around the lifted load during the operation or due to the lifting equipment itself failing or the failure of a lifting accessory.

It is essential that lifting operations are properly planned and organized in every area of our business to ensure they are carried out in a safe manner and all personnel are aware of the risks and how to control them.

Some examples of lifting equipment and accessories in our business

- Mobile, tower and overhead cranes
- Loader cranes (HIABS)
- Grab vehicles
- Excavators, mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs)
- Personal lifting
- Shackles, slings and chains
- Talk-lift and fork-lift trucks
- Passenger and goods lifts

Lifting equipment relates to equipment used for lifting or lowering a load and includes items such as a mobile crane, a passenger lift, a vehicle tail lift or a fixed overhead crane. Lifting accessories are the various items used for attaching the load to the lifting equipment such as chains, slings and eye bolts.

Lifting eyes permanently attached to a pump are not lifting accessories; they are part of the pump.

Controlling and managing the risks

Risk assessment – Is there a risk? Who is at risk? What can be done to control it? Is it enough?

- The first stage in managing risks associated with lifting operations is identifying the specific tasks that are required and who could be at risk.
- It is then important to understand how the risks can be controlled. Designers and manufacturers have a duty to build in safety measures wherever possible and will provide clear guidance on the safe operation of any lifting equipment and accessories. Depending on the work lifting operation additional control measures will be required such as a lifting plan, safe system of work, training, supervision and PPE (see below).
- For any work involving lifting operations it is important that the risk assessment is recorded so that everyone can look back at it and understand the risk but also so that it can be reviewed as the business changes and new products, processes and ways of working come about.

Following a safe system of work

- Lifting plans – a lifting plan must always be in place for all lifting operations. For more complex operations this must be produced by a specifically trained individual. For routine lifting operations a model lifting plan may be used.
- Trained and competent personnel – depending on the type of operation the work must be carried out, supervised and authorized by a competent person.

Dynamic risk assessment

- No two jobs are the same - the activity, location and pieces of equipment appear not to have changed it is important never to make assumptions. We should all continually assess risk before, during and after a work activity. Weather, temperature, time of day and individual approach can all effect the levels of risk in a job and may trigger a requirement for additional control measures.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Our minimum standard for PPE is in place to protect all staff from the hazards most common in their work activity. On some occasions additional PPE will be required in order to carry out specific tasks. This may include protective goggles, full face protection, protective overalls or different types of hand protection.



Servicing, inspection and maintenance

- It is a statutory requirement to ensure that our lifting equipment and accessories are thoroughly examined at regular intervals (12 months for equipment, 6 months for accessories and 6 months for anything used to lift people) by a competent person or organisation. Examined items can be recognized by their tags which give the date when the next inspection is due.

Key messages

- If you find yourself in the line of fire during lifting operations you could be severely injured or killed.
- Familiarise yourself with the lifting operations in your workplace and work activities and ensure you know a) what the risks are and b) how to keep yourself, your colleagues and the public out of the line of fire.
- If you are in any doubt please discuss with your line manager and safety team immediately.

Further information and reference documents

TW HSP 9 Statutory Inspections of Plant and Equipment

TW HSP 28 Safe mechanical lifting

HSE guidance - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/machinery/lifting.htm>;

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/planning-organising-lifting-operations.htm>

