



Near Miss: Baldwin Crane Hire – Fall from Height

Number NERF- 2020714 - 01

Date 14.07.2021

Summary:

Whilst rigging a 1000 tonne crane on the evening of the 14th of July 2021, an accident occurred, when a rigger stepped onto a ladder, which slipped and causing him to fall to the concrete floor below. The Injured Person (IP) fell approximately 2 metres. He was wearing a full body harness with fall arrest lanyard, as the crane was of an older design with gaps in fixed edge protection.. As the IP placed his weight on the ladder, the ladder slid from below him, causing him to lose his balance and fall. He landed on the ladder which had slid backwards, resulting in him fracturing one of the vertebrae in his lower back. The ladder was not secured at the top, nor was it footed at the base. Also, the ladder had been modified, with the bottom legs and feet removed.

Outcomes:

- All ladders must be in good working order.
- Any cranes that are accompanied with independent ladders must have current ladder inspection evidence.
- A ladder inspection record must be accessible, confirming they have been inspected.
- The Take 5 should detail all working at height activities, including ladders.
- Supervisors overseeing crane works to ensure ladders are checked and fit for purpose.

Incident Classification: RIDDOR reportable Injury

Photos



The Ladder was not secured at the top.

The Ladder was not Footed at the base

The Ladder was modified and the rubber feet had been cut off



Root Causes and Contributory Factors

- The modification to the ladder was the main contributing factor in the accident, followed closely by the ladder not being secured at the top or footed at the bottom
- The Crane erection team used the ladder throughout the day without seeing or reporting any defects with the ladder.
- They continued to use the ladder even though it was not secured, as per their own Risk Assessment stating that all ladders must be secured and footed.
- The supervision of the work activity was also poor, as the supervisor also did not identify the modified ladder or the fact it was not secured.
- The ladder defects were not reported on a pre-use inspection report or to the Company head of office, where a replacement ladder could have been dispatched.
- There is not a ladder register or any form of recorded ladder inspection within the Crane company management system. (No evidence has been supplied to HZI).
- All three members of the Crane erecting team took chances with safety throughout the day, even after the accident occurred, a team member is clearly seen in photographs exposing himself to a fall from height, without any safety harness or fall arrest/prevention equipment on.

Lesson Learned

- All mobile cranes will have their ladders inspected, with some form of a recorded inspection register in place.
- Ladders will be securely fitted at the top and footed at the bottom when they are being used.
- Any defective/modified ladders will not be allowed on a HZI project.
- Task supervision will ensure all ladders are compliant.
- HZI corporate team to look at setting an age limit on mobile cranes.
- Alternative work at height equipment is available to avoid using ladders (Podiums, gantry steps etc.)
- Supervisors to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Due to the defects with the ladder, it highlights the importance of pre-use inspections.
- A detailed Take 5 would have afforded the erection team the chance to identify the defective ladder and ensure the risk assessment control measures were followed.
- Contractors to use Ladder identifying tags to give a visual check against the register.
- Auditing and monitoring of sub-sub-contractors needs to be improved.
- The Safety awareness of the Crane erection team was poor, which demonstrates a negative safety culture within their own company, HZI HSE team have spent considerable time and effort promoting a positive safety culture on the Newhurst project. Crane company to look at behavioural safety training for their own employees.



Every Lesson Learned is an opportunity to avoid recurrences.
What have you done to avoid similar incidents on your project?

