

Dear Leigh,

The public comment period is open regarding the new U.S.OSHA crane rules, published Oct 9th. I hope the regulations have the desired effect, though I fear many of the smaller casual crane rental customers who use cranes for a few hours at a time will widely ignore them and find willing allies in fly by night rental houses.

I fear another unintended consequence may be the hastening of consolidation of the crane rental business. People like myself, who have perfect safety records but are much closer to the end of their career than the beginning, may simply leave the industry altogether, taking their experience with them. Regardless, we can all keep reading Vertikal Press to see how it all plays out.

Thanks,

Chuck Mostert

*After asking if we might publish and attribute the letter, Chuck Mostert added the following detail.*

Leigh,

You may use any or all of the note I sent to you. I guess the general feeling that I have concerning the new regs is that I think there should be more of an incentive to follow the rules rather than just a penalty if you don't (and get caught!). My bet is that 99% of the people caught in your "Death Wish" pictures still do the same dumb things. If you can show people a tangible benefit, they will fall in line like lemmings and I think training will lead to a tangible benefit, but only if all involved are trained and qualified.

That's the rub, many tradesmen will not take responsibility to train and qualify their own and as a crane owner/operator, I certainly have no authority over them.

After having watched 11 crane rental businesses come and go in the last 13 years in my local area of 100,000 people, there is always someone to take your place when you say no to a job you don't wish to undertake. If the rules mandated a better insurance rate for operators with safe histories after X number of years or, better yet, offered some form of immunity to owners and operators who followed the rules and are involved in an incident with unqualified personnel supplied by others, the crane industry would be in lockstep compliance.

The tradesmen that rent cranes, even infrequently, would then feel some pressure to train and qualify their personnel. After adding our transient labor problems, frequent language barriers and the slow economy, I foresee business as usual. Some of us may be content doing something else rather than facing ever increasing liability exposure and public scrutiny for things not in our control.

Regards,

Chuck



Dear Sirs,

Dear Sir,

Re your story "Man stuck in lift" has nobody asked the employer to explain his "contingency for emergency and rescue" as required by the Work At Height Regulations?

Chris Buisseret  
Rapid Platforms

**We responded:**

Dear Chris,  
This was one of the reasons we published this report, we will try and follow up with the employer, although they rarely say anything if they feel that they are at fault. Hopefully publicising the facts does result in a change in the company's policies, while highlighting the issue to others. One thing we ought to ask is what the HSE does when they read this. We have a high readership amongst specialist inspectors. I wonder if they make contact after such an incident?

Leigh,

I would like to think that your supposition on HSE reaction was correct, however, seeing the fashion for chopping HSE Inspector numbers, I bet they are up to their yingyangs following up all the accidents which actually call for their presence.

Certainly the HSE representative who is meant to sit on some of the Training Committees I attend, is rarely present, with apologies due to "pressure of work".

I fear the worst, and no doubt the message gets around that HSE will not (have the time or will) to follow up a report such as we see day after day on Vertikal.Net.

Chris Buisseret

Dear Leigh,

The article on self-propelled boom lifts in your October issue dates them back to the early 1960's. The one in the attached photograph dates back to around 1955.

It was the brainchild of one Ted Trump who amongst others started work in 1949 on methods of picking apples safer than from ladders. IN 1951 he introduced a trailer-mounted two boom device he called the Orchard Giraffe - he followed it with a 40ft Industrial Giraffe which he licensed to Simon Engineering in 1953, but that is another story. The Orchard Giraffe was a commercial success, but, requiring to be towed by an agricultural tractor, was not ergonomic. Trump followed it with the Girette (baby Giraffe?), a three wheeled self-propelled lift with all the movements - travel, steer, boom elevation and swing - operated from the cage by foot and knee operated controls, leaving the operator's hands free to pick apples. He went on to produce a larger industrial unit, widely used in dry docks.

Kind Regards,

Yours Sincerely,  
Dennis Ashworth

We had heard of a machine built by Trump but could not, until now, track a self propelled lift to a specific earlier date than the Selma unit of the early 60's. There is no doubt that the latter machine put the concept on the wider commercial market, thanks to Carl Ruegg's efforts with Los Angeles based rental companies. However from Ashworth's information it seems certain that the self propelled boom lift can now be positively dated back to 1955. Ed



**Letters to the editor:**

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