

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read your article entitled a New type of Harness in the last Cranes & Access magazine. In fact I would go so far as to say that I even enjoyed reading it, although I have greater reservations about the product than you appear to have.

I do agree with you that Gordon Leicester and the others at ZT Systems should be applauded for taking an original approach to personal fall protection equipment although I totally disagree that the industry has been irresponsibly slothful with new product development as you seem to suggest in your article. It is possibly true that it has not taken a radical 'out of the box' look at the subject as has obviously been the case with ZT. But there is possibly good reason for this in that for many applications the traditional harness is still the best way to go. Tilting someone into a reclined position could in some cases be more dangerous than the fall itself.

When a person falls they are most often falling off of a structure, such as a building and it is possible that with the ZT harness they will crack their head against the structure as they are pulled into what you describe as a foetal position? This would be compounded if the fall occurred in a small space such as a lift shaft.

You also make a point about the testing of harnesses and you may well have a point here although I think you have been over simplistic in your apparent dismissal of what has gone before and I do wonder on what you base this? While ZT's use of car crash dummies does bring some really good and useful data to the subject it is also incomplete. While they do occur, few falls are in open space, so dropping someone from a crane hook is hardly representative of the real world – it may apply to tower crane operators but most falls are, as I have already said, alongside buildings or other structures.

Perhaps ZT ought to go back and test their harness in a manner that replicates this? Finally while critical of some of the points you make, or seem to make, I would completely agree with your final conclusion that it is folly to cut corners on a harness if you are working at height on a regular or even

occasional basis. A good quality harness is both safe and much more comfortable and well worth the modest extra investment.

Many thanks for an interesting article.

Phillip Green

This letter arrived in our office via an unmarked fax - written as an informal note, sadly we could not trace the sender. He does not appear to have consciously made a decision to withhold his identity and may have simply not considered it? While he takes issue with the tone of our article he does appear to have a good deal of experience of the industry and we would like to attribute the letter and the comments he has made. Mr Green - if you would care to contact us we would be delighted to give credit in the next issue. Ed

Hi Leigh,

We would like to thank you and all who put together such a wonderful showcase of high risk equipment and products related to the lift and access industry. Both Tim and I were very impressed with the products we saw and the information we can now take back to Australia. Our son also had a fantastic time with the big toys.

We will certainly be letting our colleagues know about the Vertikal Days Expo.

Again thank you for a wonderful two days at Vertikal Expo.

Kind Regards

Tim, Sally & Alexander Rees

Southern Cross Training and Assessing
Singleton NSW

This was one of many kind letters and emails regarding this year's Vertikal Days, we chose this one as we believe that it came the furthest distance. On behalf of the entire Vertikal Days Team I would like to say how much we all appreciated your comments.

Leigh Sparrow

Dear Sir,

You carried a small news article in your April/May edition 13.3 showing a group of men hanging from their harnesses on a steel wire. I did follow the internet address that you showed to read the full story and found it very interesting although I was curious why in the internet version you guessed that this might have happened in Korea? I assume that you meant South Korea which is my home state and I am not aware of this incident at all although that does not mean it did not happen here. We do not have an industry press that covers such things, which is why I like to read publications such as yours which I find most stimulating as well as keeping me in touch with the international market. I was also very happy to find your internet site through this story and I am now a regular internet user. But here in the office we do like the magazine best and I would like to tell you that it gets passed around to everyone and then when the new one arrives, we put the old one in our bookshelf with all the copies that we have received from you so far.

If you have more information on the story I would be very interested to hear it.

Kim Il Sung

We did email Kim Il Sung back to obtain more information and obtain his agreement to publish this letter with his company name but have not received a response on going to press. We also do not have any further information on this incident and our 'guess' of Korea as the venue was based on gut instinct and was totally unscientific. We had hoped that a reader would have confirmed the location, but this has not happened – which is unusual. If anyone does know where it occurred please contact us. You can read the full story on www.vertikal.neten/news/story/12154 Ed

Dear Leigh,

Like most rental companies that provide a haulage or a transport service we sometimes struggle to get a unit off site. This is a real cost that not only affects that days transport but it often has a significant knock-on effect when fleet utilisation is high. What is the general consensus in the plant hire industry. I would like to introduce a haulage charge to be the true cost of transport each way or £300 which ever is higher, along with a waiting charge of £55 per hour. To be honest we currently only charge transport one way, due to competitive pressures and this is simply not adequate.

please do let me know you thoughts when you get a second,
regards

Gerard Jennings

Easi UpLifts UK

PS: I would be also interested to see if the industry as a whole had any appetite for charging for cancellation on specialised product orders. Something along the lines of

"Any cancellation or amendment of an order within two weeks of start date may result in a cost of the first weeks hire value and stated transport of the unit"

We think that Gerard Jennings has a very valid point, surely the industry is now mature enough that it can look at adopting some of the pricing disciplines that are now common practice within the car hire, hotel and airline industries? With the lowest prices carrying no change policies or paying a higher price for full flexibility. It is also about time the true cost of transport was recognised. While the exceptionally customer friendly nature of both the crane and access rental businesses is something that we would should try to hang on to, companies are often abused by customers who exploit it. Perhaps a firmer but still friendly attitude would be more efficient all round?

Leigh Sparrow

Accident or Incident

Dear Sir,

Your comment 'Accident or Incident' in Cranes & Access magazine this month caught my attention. I agree with the proposal that most if not all accidents are predictable and can thus be avoided. It is hard to take an opposing view to this after all. But.... It ignores the main ingredient of human nature which after all is something that makes life on this planet tolerable. I am of the opinion that the regulatory authorities are wrong to follow the idea that accidents - incidents if you prefer - should be totally stamped out. I know this may sound counterintuitive but the point I would like to make is that it is possible to stop almost all accidents if we really wanted to. The technology is available, but most right minded people consider that the cost is too high and also that the world would be an intolerable place if every risk was removed. What we need to focus on are the idiots that do blatantly stupid and careless things that are likely to kill or maim others.

I wonder if the FEM ban you refer to will have any serious impact - those who voted for this are those who already don't do it. I would rather see good companies plan 'fun' or leisure lifts with care and precision than leave it to the cowboys who will always ignore any such rules handed down from on high. If we take this mentality further there is no need for anyone to ride on a roller coaster or on those increasingly risky rides that theme parks keep adding, so why not ban them to prevent the odd heart attack or occasional accident? I think the FEM ought to get a day job!

Have a safe one

Les Brindley

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