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ALLMI Operators' Forum One Year On

In March 2005, representatives from ALLMI met with a group of fleet operators with the idea to establish a new ALLMI division. The inaugural meeting of the ALLMI Operators' Forum was held 11 months later. Since then the Forum has gone from strength to strength and already has 30 members including some of the largest fleet owners in the UK. We look at what the Operators' Forum has achieved in its first year.

The first task was to set out aims and objectives, the underlying theme of which was to raise the standard of loader crane operators. An application process was formulated, requiring applicants to detail their standards while providing the Forum Executive Committee with the ability to identify areas for

The interchange of ideas and opinions takes place partly via general meetings, but also through the Forum's representatives on the ALLMI Technical and Training Committees, which between them produce guidance on all aspects of lorry loader use. Amongst other things, the Forum has already had

a direct involvement in the development of the recently released ALLMI Slinger / Signaller course, the revision of the ALLMI Code of Practice and the training programme for thorough examinations and load tests of lorry loaders, which is

due to be released later this year.

The Forum's representative on the Training Committee, Peter Duckett of WTB Group, comments: "Being part of the ALLMI Training Committee has been a pleasure and a privilege. Through my representation, end users are provided with the opportunity to actually shape and develop the industry's leading training programmes in accordance with their needs and requirements."

When it comes to issues that members want to discuss in between meetings, the recently introduced on-line Forum allows members to discuss loader crane related issues over the web. While it has been an eventful first year there are more developments planned for the year ahead as the Operators Forum gathers momentum.

The next 12 months

Two major Standards affecting loader cranes - BS 7121 Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Cranes Part 4 Lorry Loaders, and BS EN 12999, Cranes/Loader Cranes are currently under revision. ALLMI has representatives on both of the Committees dealing with these

improvement and provide any necessary advice and guidance. The Forum is providing outside organisations with an ideal communication channel to the UK's lorry loader owners. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), for example, has been represented at two of the three general meetings held to date, providing members with guidance on important issues, such as working at height, falls from vehicles, the legislative requirements surrounding the use of lorry loaders and safety alerts resulting from accidents. While VOSA (Vehicle and Operator Services Agency) has used ALLMI to inform members of the requirements from vehicle inspectors in relation to lorry loaders.

The two sides of ALLMI complement each other extremely well. On the one hand are the crane manufacturers and service companies, which can provide technical expertise, while on the other hand the operators provide invaluable feedback to the manufacturers on the products and services they are producing.



The FTA will demonstrate a new loader crane simulator at the next Forum meeting

Standards, with 12999 already underway and 7121 due to commence in April. Forum members have already been asked for their input on the proposed changes, with a further progress report to operators being expected later this year providing all ALLMI members with a direct say in the standards that will impact on their business.

In addition to industry standards, ALLMI is developing further guidance notes that will benefit end users, with ground pressure and non destructive testing being top of the agenda, along with risk assessments and method statements for loader crane operations.

The association is also working with the HSE, on its forthcoming campaign on vehicle bed access. In fact the HSE's Sarah Hague will attend the Forum's general meeting in the autumn in order to outline its plans for this campaign and to receive feedback from operators.

In addition to providing members with information necessary to raise standards, and belonging to an association that clearly represents high quality standards, a fundamental aim of ALLMI, is also negotiating supply agreements that will benefit members financially. The Association's approved insurance supplier, AIPS Ltd, has already saved manufacturing and service members' money and will shortly roll-out its programme to Forum members. Other supply agreements will cover all manner of ancillary equipment for lorry loaders, such as slings, chains,

fall arrest equipment, etc, which should generate further opportunities for members to save money.

The Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Operators' Forum will be held on the 12th April at the Strawberry Bank Hotel, Meriden, Coventry, and will include presentations from PC Bill Slater of the West Midlands Police on road safety with lorry loaders, Barbara Edwards from AIPS on Insurance services, and Brian Szukala from the Freight Transport Association, who will be demonstrating an innovative loader crane simulator (see pictures).



For further information on this meeting or the Operators' Forum, contact Tom Wakefield ALLMI general manager.

The new ALLMI Forum sticker for members vehicles

