

Operators Forum gains momentum



On the 22nd November, the ALLMI Operators' Forum held its third General Meeting of the year. With membership continually growing and attendances at meetings becoming ever more impressive, the Operators' Forum is gathering serious momentum.

Operators Forum on the web

ALLMI general manager, Tom Wakefield, introduced a new section of the ALLMI website specifically for the Operators' Forum. The website will feature a Forum membership list, broken down into the UK regions, including contact details and website links for each member, in addition to a business description of up to 100 words. Operators' Forum members will also have access to a secure, password-protected section of the site that will

include a download area where meeting minutes, membership correspondence and various other documents can be downloaded. Possibly the most significant development though is the introduction of an 'Online Forum' which will allow members to discuss lorry loader related matters via their website. Initial issues will include working at height, ground pressure, lone working and pre-operational checks. The forum was due to go live at the start of December.



A new Operators Forum area of the ALLMI web site

ALLMI code of practice

The meeting continued with a report from ALLMI technical director, Eric Hawkyard, on the work performed by ALLMI's Technical Committee representatives on the British and European Standards Committees for Loader Cranes. He also explained the

relevance of the ALLMI Code of Practice with an update on the process of re-writing it. For further information on the content of the meeting or the Operators' Forum in general, please contact Tom Wakefield of ALLMI on 01249 659150.

New European Standard



Outrigger pads may need to be larger under new proposals

Moving on to the European Standard for Loader Cranes, BS/EN12999, also due for revision, Simpson told the meeting that members of the Forum would have the opportunity to express their views through ALLMI.

He went on to outline the current proposals coming from the UK and explained how these changes would further improve safety in the industry. Those proposals include:-

- Expanding the requirements specifying the direction of control lever action, in

order to reduce the degree of injury sustained when a person is trapped between the crane boom and the controls, through involuntary application of the controls.

- The requirement for stabiliser interlocks in order to address the problem of overturning vehicles through the non-use of outriggers. Removal of the possibility to override a crane's rated capacity limiter, while making them mandatory on all loader cranes. The current standard only requires their fitment on cranes of over 40kNm or 1000Kg.
- The reduction of ground bearing pressures is also on the agenda, in order to improve stability and to prevent damage to ground surfaces. This could be achieved by fitting larger fixed outrigger pads to the crane or possibly by supplying loose, supplementary mats.
- Limiting manually extended stabilisers to cranes of less than 40kNm or 1000Kg rated capacity, in order to reduce the accidents caused by stabiliser legs extending during transit, which are most often caused by the operator's failure to correctly stow the legs for travel.



HSE update

Ian Simpson, specialist inspector for the Health and Safety Executive's Construction Division Technology Unit presented a wide range of issues beginning by explaining the relationship between European Directives and UK legislation and standards.

Simpson reported that the forthcoming revision of BS 7121 Part 4 'The Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Cranes - Lorry Loaders', should commence in early 2007, and that members of the Operators' Forum would have the opportunity to have input into this revision through ALLMI. He then moved on to explain the legal requirements in relation to the purchase, use and sale of lorry loader cranes.

In regards to purchase, buyers must give consideration to the type of work that the crane will be undertaking (PUWER Regulation 4, LOLER Regulation 8), including the types of load it will be used to lift, the operating radius, the boom height required, where the operator will be positioned and how the vehicle will be loaded. The frequency at which the lorry loader will be used also needs to be considered, as this will affect its life expectancy.

Simpson continued with an explanation of the importance of design strength and stability of the equipment (LOLER Regulation 4, PUWER regulations 4 and 20, and the Supply of Machinery Safety Regulations - SMSR), its integration with the vehicle chassis and the importance of correct stability calculations by the installer. He also reminded Forum members that they have the right to request a copy of these calculations. The requirements for CE marking and a declaration of conformity, and how this document should make reference to the

Machinery Directive was also covered. Along with the requirement for the marking of the equipment (SMSR, LOLER Regulation 7, PUWER Regulation 23 and 58), including capacity charts, Safe Working Load of lifting accessories and the warning of any hazards.

The subject of maintenance (SMSR, PUWER Regulation 22) and the requirement for safe access to enable routine maintenance, as well as the need for the provision of an operator's manual and a maintenance manual was also covered.

Moving onto the operation of lorry loaders, Simpson explained the requirement for the appointment of a competent person (LOLER Regulation 8, BS 7121 Part 4) the elements of risk assessment and lift planning and the use of method statements. This was followed with a look at the requirements for training, competency, inspection and thorough examinations. The rules also affect the disposal and sale of a used loader crane, the documents required at handover-CE Declaration of Conformity, maintenance records, report of thorough examination, test certificates and details of any alterations made to the crane.

Finally as if to accentuate the need for the new code, he covered recent accident statistics relating to lorry loaders. One of the main causes of accidents is trapping, where an operator is struck or trapped by the boom, load or stabiliser legs, whilst falls from height are also significant. Simpson claimed that the reduction in accidents relating to mechanical failures over the past 10 years have been due to improvements in the design of lorry loaders.