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Readers Letters



Highly accredited

Dear Sir,

I have just read your article "Highly accredited" and tend to agree that gaining accreditations is less news worthy than it once. HOWEVER.....

On a personal note I must say you have touched on a hobby horse of mine that was a growing problem in a previous company I worked for and I know it still is for many rental companies – from conversations I have had at IPAF and other industry meetings.

It can take almost 50 percent of one persons time filling "supplier request forms" to keep up with this. Even if you save all of the relevant information in a folder or on a stick, the majority of companies we supplied still insisted on having their own form filled in!!! Bureaucracy gone mad! Many of the larger companies and all the "blue chip" companies then required that the rental company gained a specific accreditation before they were accepted as an approved supplier.

And where is the value in gaining ISO 9001, 14001 and OHSAS 18000 as the contractors want to see these accreditations as well their chosen accreditation scheme....or at the very least evidence that you are "working towards" achieving them.

In these "recessionary times" when cost is under the microscope.... the number and cost of accreditations that rental companies are now expected to gain before they can supply to individual contractors is out of hand and in my mind a "money making affair". It would be interesting to see how many of the contractors gain financially from this process. Achilles is the worst - they charge for all three as separate audits yet they ask 90% the same questions. The registration cost alone to gain all three Achilles accreditations was in excess of £7,000 a few years ago!

All the schemes vary very little in the detail and evidence they ask for yet many rental companies will have to gain them all if they wish to meet

and supply specific customer requirements. What I also find frustrating/ridiculous is such schemes were designed as contractor approval schemes – for a major contractor to select and approve sub-contractors. Duty of care CDM and all that.

The majority of UK rental companies are not contractors but "suppliers" yet are still asked to gain "contractor" accreditations. Such as Safe Contractor, Achilles Link-up (rail), Achilles UVDB verify (Utilities), Achilles Building Confidence (construction), CHAS etc....

There needs to be a programme where each accreditation scheme recognises the other schemes as equal/comparable and thus contractors do not demand a particular accreditation but will accept any one accreditation as long as it is to an "agreed standard".

The access industry is crying out for one scheme that is nationally respected and has real value and will prevent all this money making, time wasting box ticking bureaucracy. Sorry for the rant – but I think it is something that many other rental companies have an issue with.

Name withheld at correspondents request.

This letter came in as a result of a comment we made about the number of Access rental companies gaining or retaining Achilles and other types of accreditation. While admirable it is no longer news when this happens. We have also been critical in the past of the proliferation of these schemes, particularly in the UK where it has become a money spinner for the accreditation companies. It would be a real plus if IPAF and ESTA/CPA could have their own accreditations – such as IPAF Rental + approved by all the major contractors. We would be very interested to hear more views on this subject.

Fair in love and war?

Hi Leigh,

Just read your article, "what's fair in love and war".

As I was reading it, I was wondering if you didn't have one or two rental companies in mind?? I certainly did as I read it!!

I can tell you for a fact, one major player has tried the "bully" tactics in Central Europe, and it has backfired on them spectacularly as you say quite often happens. However, a more worrying situation in my view is where "two" major companies work together to dominate an entire region/market/country, and I can also tell you for a fact, that is going on in a country not too far away from where I am based.

Name withheld for obvious reasons

The practices we referred to are illegal even when one dominant player is doing it, if two majors team up it moves up to a whole new level of illegality. We are seeing what we can find out.

Simon S300 parts

Dear Sir,

We are owners of cranes & platforms and I need your help with my platform Simon S300. I am looking for its main hydraulic filter. This machine was imported to Cyprus from the UK and came without a filter. I would really appreciate it if you could help me to find one.

Regards

Pavlos Charalambous

Marinos Antoniou Lifting Services Ltd

We gave Mr Charalambous a couple of suggestions but as of a week before going to press he was still struggling to find a source of parts for his Simon S300 if any readers can help we would be happy to pass on your details.

Readers Letters



Harnessing safety

Hi Mark,

Hope you are keeping well.

Just a bit of feed back from reading this month's Cranes & Access – I would prefer if my name was not used. I read with interest the reference to JLG stating "JLG will show its 24.6 metre articulated boom JLG 740AJ boom..... it incorporates a fall arrest rail around the top of the platform, allowing operators outside the platform while remaining tethered."

Does this mean that JLG approves exiting the platform at height?

I also have a number of issues with the article entitled Harnessing safety including comments such as:

"one of significance in Europe is the 2005 Work at Height Regulations" – it does not make clear that the WAH Regs are only relevant in UK and were the result of the EU directive 2001/45/EC. The author then incorrectly refers to them as the "working at height regulations".

Also in the same article "most take precautions at heights of over 20 metres, while few consider it when working....."

I think the author meant two metres!!

It is a shame that the IPAF H1 statement – recently amended was not mentioned.

We appreciate comments such as this, all of which help correct errors, point out omissions and help us improve the publication. We acknowledge the point on the IPAF statement which we have covered frequently in the past. The 20 metres was not an error at all, the author was making the point that when working at greater heights – say over 20 metres – most people are more cautious and do take relevant precautions – while not giving it any thought at all when working from the back of a truck.

Here is the passage again – "Most take precautions at heights of over 20 metres, while few consider it when working on a flatbed truck a metre off the ground."

We are also aware that the Work At Height Regulations 2005 are the UK interpretation of the EU temporary work at height directive – we think this comment is a touch pedantic – we are not after all trying to create a manual here. But once again we very much appreciate the reader's comments and would encourage more of such feedback.

Ed

Fake Chinese cranes!

Dear Leigh

I have been following your articles online and the latest letters in Cranes and Access with interest. This subject has been a pain in our side for a good few years now and I am pleased it has finally come to light.

There are several websites offering Machinery for sale from China which are doing none of us in the crane industry any good. They are advertising cranes for sale which are totally misrepresented by specification, model, age and price, and as some of your readers have pointed out, are fakes! I have tried on several occasions to confront these websites about the misrepresentation of the cranes, but to no avail. Still they come.

Only today, I was alerted to a 2008 Kato NK 500 for sale at 61,396 euros. Anyone who knows their Kato cranes would know that a 2008 machine does not have two lift rams, hinged top cab door, twin exhausts from a V8 engine, and would be worth a lot more than 61,396 euros! I would buy the genuine article all day long at that price!! This is just one example of many.

However, the damage has been done, and we have been inundated over the years by prospective buyers coming on to us having seen the spurious Chinese models advertised and expecting to buy the genuine items from us at the same price. It has become quite tiresome, and the fuse is becoming short!

I don't know what can be done about this. I remember a few years ago, a similar problem arose with 'grey imports', when the powers that be wanted nothing to do with it. However, I do feel that the websites concerned should be more responsible about the goods they are advertising and somehow check them out.

I hope this letter adds some fuel to the fire.

Yours sincerely

Peter Burwell, Director, Thames Crane Services Ltd

We completely agree with Mr Burwell and have always been keen to expose this sort of thing. We were also surprised recently to find cranes that were clearly counterfeit being offered on some major used equipment web sites. While it can be hard to police those who list such cranes, perhaps it would help if the websites had a simple procedure that allowed people who spot them to alert the web master in a similar way that many web forums have a facility to report abuse?

This is again a subject that we would like to look at more closely and would appreciate further letters.

Ed

Why two when one will do?

The following letter was sent following an incident in Northern Ireland in which a foot and cycle bridge had to be placed across the river. It seems that to save money the contractor working for the local government chose a cheaper option of carrying out a tandem lift. Unfortunately the lift went wrong and the bridge was badly buckled. Thankfully no one was hurt in the incident – you can see the report on the incident on www.vertikal.net/en/news/story/16896/

Hi Leigh,

See attached link to UTV in Northern Ireland.

This was caused by sling compression on the lower chords of the bridge both laterally and longitudinally i.e. slings too short because of crane boom limitations and no spreader beams to eliminate lateral loads.

The crane probably could not accommodate the additional weight of these and the crane company might not have had this equipment anyway.

They were going to set the bridge down on the bank behind the 350 tonner, attach the second crane, release the 350 tonner and then re-sling.

How did the designer sign-off on a tandem lift in marine conditions when a single crane option was available? You know someone was expected to walk across that bridge when it was attached to the crane to attach the slings; persons walking on a suspended load?

This job needed a 500 tonner which we know was available for this job. I don't mind being subject to stringent H & S scrutiny but it really annoys me when Principal Contractors and Government Agencies feel that the only ruling factor applicable to them is cost.

This is sent with confidence in your discretion!

Name withheld as requested.