

Readers Letters



Mark

As a regular reader of Cranes & Access and also as a member of the Powered Access Industry for some 35 years, I am surprised that Page 4 of the June edition contains a misleading advert placed by IPAF, which again erroneously leads potential users and manufacturers to believe that platform users require the IPAF licence to operate access platforms.

We all know this to be incorrect ... certificate or evidence of training – Yes (LOLER and PUWER clearly state) but issued by IPAF “only” ... NO !!!.

There are numerous companies and their clients, in the UK, including manufacturers and suppliers, who are not, nor ever want to be, IPAF members.

My understanding, and that of many colleagues, is there is no mandatory requirement for a licence to be issued, in fact the HSE stated some years ago that whilst it was acceptable, it wasn't mandatory. Should this not be the case, perhaps the HSE would comment on, and clear up, this situation, which has existed for years.

Such non IPAF companies are not only competent, but in many cases are even more so than IPAF. This is due to their greater experience, coupled with more

specialised knowledge with the product, thus allowing them to carry out training with the subsequent issue of Competency / Training Certificates to their clients, their staff and operators, fully complying with the requirements of current legislation.

Consequently, seeing adverts such as the one referred to, in the opinion of many, threatens the activities of legitimate and competent suppliers, manufacturers and platform users who are not in the IPAF camp. There is no wish to denigrate the previous very worthwhile activities and achievements of IPAF, but they, like everyone else in the Access Industry, remain only a profit making, private, non-government organisation..... not a mandatory authority.

Many companies continue to be active in the Access industry, remaining respectable, competent and dedicated in the provision of access platforms, along with the associated service, maintenance and training and it's time that this was recognised by IPAF.

Regards,

J C Wood – JCW Consultancy – Cheshire

Mr Wood raises an issue that has been covered by us in the past, in this case we do not believe that his point is valid. The fact is that within the EU and many other jurisdictions, there is a legal obligation for operators or for that matter any employee, to be properly trained to operate any machinery that they are required to do as part of their job. Increasingly the authorities - especially when it comes to an inquest after an accident - ask what training was provided, who provided it and how they were qualified to do so. The aim of most programmes, such as the IPAF PAL card is to offer a consistent, widely recognised course with proof of training that simply ends that discussion. It is convenience and consistency not obligation that makes these cards an attractive proposition for employers. Mr Wood does make a very good point in that independent training may be as good or even better, the problem for the employer sending a man onto a large site, or sitting in a courtroom is defending the quality of the training. A nationally or internationally recognised course or standard is so much easier and as far as we are aware most training programmes set minimum standards and do not penalise those who exceed them with their training. Given that Mr Wood's letter arrived well before the publication of this month's issue, we did send a copy to IPAF and asked them to respond to the letter which they have done and we publish that in full below. Ed

Dear Mark,

Thank you for bringing this letter to IPAF's attention. The writer's concern about the wording of the IPAF advert (page 4 in the June issue of Cranes & Access) is a bit baffling.

The writer takes issue with the use of the word “need” to indicate that those who use access platforms “need” (implying “legally required”) an IPAF PAL Card (Powered Access Licence).

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “need” as “to require (something) because it is essential or very important rather than just desirable”. This is different from “obligatory” or “legally required”.

The IPAF advert does not claim that the PAL Card is compulsory or legally required. It is, however, compulsory and legally required for employers to train employees in the safe use of all work equipment, including that for work at height (UK Work at Height Regulations 2005).

The PAL Card is not mandated by law. Rather, its strength lies in the fact that it is industry-led and voluntary. There are other training courses available, yet IPAF has won industry-wide acceptance (including from the UK Contractors

Group) as proof of high quality training for platform operators. Why? Because PAL Card training is a complete training programme delivered according to an international standard (ISO 18878), designed by manufacturers, rental companies and users to meet safety norms and legal requirements, backed by a system of auditing and quality control, and strengthened by regular annual updates of training material.

I would invite the writer to take an IPAF training course, if he or she has yet to do so. IPAF is a not-for-profit organisation and our objectives are simple and clear: We want to ensure our industry is safe, safe for all users of powered access equipment. At the end of the day, safety cannot be mandated. The industry must want to use powered access equipment safely and responsibly. And if they freely choose to use PAL Card training and this standardised training gains acceptance, then the battle for safety is half-won.

Yours sincerely

Tim WHITEMAN

Managing Director – IPAF.

Hello Leigh/Mark

Just a couple of points in response to your 'spider' article in the April/May 2013 magazine. You have written that the Falcon FS520 is the only model in your 50 metre+ comparison that 'offers any below ground capability'. All Palazzani spiders have a jib boom which gives below ground capability but especially the XTJ models which have superb capability in this respect. The XTJ stands for extending fly jib and the XTJ52 has the best capability in the range with approximately seven metres below ground reach (see attached working envelope). You are right to say that below ground reach is an increasingly popular capability, I have attached some photographs which demonstrate some examples of how our Palazzani equipment has been used in this way.

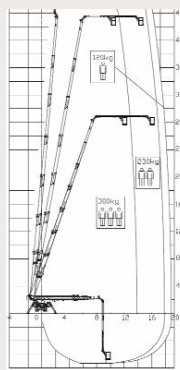
We were lucky enough to visit the Palazzani factory last week and put the machine through its paces. Very impressive, particularly its stability even at full height and how the precise controls instil a lot of confidence for the operator. Palazzani have introduced some very interesting new products in recent years including the new TSJ25. We have ordered one for delivery in September which we will be demonstrating to potential customers throughout the UK and Ireland. We are unable to get a machine for the Vertikal Days show this year but we are looking forward to visiting anyway - hopefully it will be a successful show.

Please let me know if you have any questions relating to the Palazzani range.

Regards

Phil Lomax

TCA Lifting Limited



NB: You'll notice that we have changed our company name - this is to better reflect our product offering and not restricted to 'tracked access' equipment. As the Palazzani dealer we feel it is important to reflect the entire spider range which includes the option of wheeled chassis. This type of chassis is still very popular with many customers - particularly in the Middle East. We also have a number of Maeda cranes in our rental fleet together with lifting accessories and over the years have sold equipment from the world's leading manufacturers such as Genie, JLG and Skyjack.

Mr Lomax is right we did miss the fact that the new Palazzani offered below ground reach, we are not sure if this was an error on our part in the chart, or that we were simply unaware of it at the time as the machine was brand new at Bauma and the information at the time of writing was very basic. In our defence we did not have access to the excellent technical literature for this machine that has been produced since Bauma and that clearly shows this feature. Either way the original review clearly highlighted the new many attributes of this new big spider, which did impress. The whole subject of below ground working on both spider lifts and truck mounted lifts is one that we will be looking at again in future issues of the magazine.
Ed

Dear Leigh,

Even though I await my copy of C&A, I know it is also available on-line through vertikal.net and so couldn't help but have a quick preview through the latest April/May 2013 publication and a comment by the 'editor' in reply to a readers letter about 'suspension trauma' caught my eye: "however it is silly to pretend that a rescue plan is always in place, most often there is not - at least with powered access".

It's good to see C&A not skirt around this issue and provide accurate reporting to that effect. Many things we do throughout the powered access industry is a result of 'Best Practice Guidance' yet planning to work at height including the planning for emergency and rescue is a legal requirement!

So why do so many end-users fail in their responsibilities to even have the simplest of plans in place? It could be that powered access by its very nature is for short duration temporary work at height and so it's often easier to ignore the subject and complete the job before they're ever asked.

It could also be that any freely available guidance for a

majority of users is very limited and many just simply don't know or don't understand what it is they are supposed to do. Many would also wrongly assume that they need to employ extra staff or undertake rope abseiling courses!

There are those within our industry who believe the level of available guidance is sufficient. I have however enclosed a copy of the recently printed MEWP Site Specific Safe Systems of work booklet to hopefully demonstrate to you that there are some of us still prepared to try and make a difference.

Though just a starting block, it has been generated from my own personal frustrations as an operator in ensuring that I have the right 'tools' on the job to assess each working day on an individual site and machine specific basis and to comply with both safety and legal requirements placed upon me.

It has already received positive encouragement from many who would like to achieve greater clarity and I am also grateful to certain members within the HSE who have provided valued feedback. It is readily available to order on-line for client organisations and end-users who are prepared to adopt it.

Yours Sincerely

Alan Howes

Dear Leigh,

The following is my predicament; I purchased an XCMG 30 Ton Truck Crane through their dealer in the Niagara area of Canada. The crane was purchased subject to CE Certification for Europe, I issued them with an official company purchase order to that effect and received an invoice from them stating the same.

The crane was shipped from Shanghai to Dublin, Can-Pick Niagara contracted Laidler & Associates in the UK who are accredited to complete the CE Certification on arrival in Ireland. They could not complete the CE Certification as XCMG China told Laidler & Associates that the crane should not have been sent to Europe and that the dealer Can-Pick should have known that. As you can see from looking at the various crane magazines XCMG are setting up a base in Krefeld, Germany this year. I have enclosed a

The following letter was received from Sean Walsh of Walsh Crane hire in Ireland, relating to an XCMG crane he ordered. A batch of documents came with it, including a bill of lading clearly showing that the shipper was XCMG construction machinery group and the port of loading was Shanghai and the final destination Dublin, Ireland. All the other documentation clearly shows that the crane was ordered with CE certification and confirmed by the manufacturer's official dealer with CE certification. The total cost landed Dublin was \$240,000.

copy of a letter received from XCMG to Laidler & Associates.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours Sincerely

Sean Walsh
Managing Director
Walsh Crane Hire Ltd

The following letter was sent from XCMG to notified body Laidler & Associates and is reproduced in full - excluding serial numbers etc - without edits.

To Laidler Certification LLP

By Fax

Dear Sirs,

We have received the e-mail that your company sent to Mr Jack on January 7 about the issue with the XCMG crane. According to the serial number in the e-mail, we have found the information of the crane that you carried out the assessment of in Southern Ireland. (serial numbers all provided)

According to the product sales contract signed on December 18th 2007 between our company and XCMG import and export company, (like us this company is also a subsidiary of XCMG especial for foreign trade), this crane was exported to America and requested compliance to American EPA 2008, but not requested to be in compliance to European standard, and so not requested to have CE mark. According to this contract, we delivered this crane to Shanghai in May 1, 2008.

We now have two CE "Certificate of Adequacy" issued by your company for 8 models of mobile crane, but not including the QY30K5. This model of crane has not been certified for CE, and also not been improved according to EN13000. Therefore, when Can-Pick of Canada asked us for the CE certificate of QY30K5 through XCMG import and export company, we told them clearly that this crane has not been carried out CE certification and no compliance to CE requirement. Can-Pick of Canada said that "All components on the 30K are the same as the QY25K, and all technical data is the same" that is not correct, because the main technical specification of QY30K5 – the maximum rated load lifting capacity is more 25% than that of QY25K.

From your e-mail, we may also found that the manual of this crane is not originally supplied, but is the edition of Can-Pick Canada. Our English manuals for variable models of mobile crane are all printed by ourselves,

and never authorize any foreign company to offer. So it may be also known from this, it is Can-Pick of Canada that sold the cranes with no compliance to CE requirement for Southern Ireland without XCMG agreement.

Therefore, the model QY30K5 you had carried out assessment in Southern Ireland which with no compliance to European mechanical directive and European harmonized standard EN13000-2004 is not that XCMG want to sell the crane with no CE mark to Europe, but is the reason what the Can-Pick of Canada had done.

However we still thank you for your assessment on our QY30K5 and feedback the information to us. We will carry out improvement on the next batch of crane product for CE certification including the QY30K5. If it is convenient, we hope to be given the detailed information as guidance for improvement on this model. We will also strengthen the training of our dealers and the quality control of export products in order to avoid a similar case occurs again.

There above are our survey on this case and the plan for the future. We earnestly request that you think over the case, and hopes not to remove our Certificate of Adequacy. If you have any other questions please tell us readily so that we can deal with this matter as better as possible.

Best Regards

(company stamp but no name or signature)

XCMG, Xuzhou Heavy Machinery Co., Ltd

We have commented on this type of deal in a recent vertikal.net editorial. A poll run at the same time drew almost 400 votes with 67.9 percent saying that manufacturers should help buyers with certification (with a fee for any costs) when they import new or used machines from another region.

Dear Mr Sparrow

I managed to have a few minutes of your time at the recent Vertikal Days, when I suggested that along with the subject of MOTs for mobile cranes, why does no-one seem to query the fact that the drivers of such machines are not covered by the Drivers Hours regulations that affect all other drivers of Large Goods Vehicles?

Crane operators have to have the appropriate LGV license so why do they escape the 'Tachograph Regulations' ?

I am not criticising the crane hire industry for not pushing this, but more the government for providing this 'loop hole'. Unlike the requirement for having cranes comply with the MOT, which would require an investment in test stations able to accommodate the cranes, this change in the law would cost nothing.

I have worked in the crane hire industry since May 1976, always on the operations side, and this anomaly between the lorry drivers and the crane drivers has always puzzled me.

Should you publish this 'talking point' please keep my I.D. anonymous as I am still employed in the crane hire business.

Finally thanks you for your time at Vertikal Days and what a cracking good show it was. Well done.

Yours Sincerely,

Name and address supplied in full but withheld as requested.