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CPA Crane Interest Group Meeting

This year's CPA Crane Interest Group Meeting covered several interesting topics including lifting people with cranes, road brake testing, elevating cabs on cranes as well as an HSE update.

The meeting held at the Nuthurst Grange Hotel, Hockley Heath attracted a good number of delegates from rental companies, manufacturers and contractors. Chairman Neil Partridge - now officially retired from Ainscough Crane Hire - was on vacation so Bill Frost of Bronzeshield stood in and is likely to be the front runner to be the next chairman to be decided at the group's AGM in February.

Lifting people with cranes

Tim Watson covered several topics including the thorny subject of Lifting Persons with Cranes for Entertainment Purposes. Vertical.net has been running an opinion poll asking the question - When is it acceptable to lift people with cranes? With more than 700 responses the vast majority (68.6 percent) agreed it should be for work only when it is truly the only option. 21.5 percent believe it is acceptable for entertainment purposes if those being lifted understood the risks, and 10 percent said that it is acceptable to lift people any time it is convenient.

Watson reiterated that lifting people at work should only be in exceptional circumstances when it is the only option. He said FEM had softened its original stance to a 'yes you can if you comply with a multitude of requirements'. Whilst the HSE appears to condone the practice, crane rental companies should be absolutely aware that if there is an incident, they will have to prove that everything had been done to negate its occurrence. Watson put forward several items that should be considered including insurance, is it a Contract lift or a Hire, how difficult it is to control the public when being lifted, design of the man-riding gear, damage to reputation and of course having a

rescue contingency in place.

BS 7121 Part 2 revised

BS 7121 Part 2 - Safe use of cranes - Part 2 Inspection, maintenance and through examination - last reviewed 10 years ago - has been revised. The revision extends the scope to include maintenance and is split into parts - general Part 2.1 and crane specific parts including mobile loader cranes, tower cranes etc. For those wanting a copy of the (very expensive) standard a 50 percent CPA discount is available to members.

Brake agreement

A document on the in-service testing of brakes on mobile cranes has been agreed with VOSA, following confusion over braking requirements for mobile cranes running with up to 16.5 tonne axle weights rather than 12 tonnes. A new Technical Information Note is available on the CPA website. Watson added that cranes need a notional braking efficiency of 30 percent, where an HGV test requires 50 percent for the service brake. Secondary brakes need 15 percent rather than 25 percent and the parking brake has to be capable of holding the vehicle stationary on an 18 percent gradient, which is slightly different to the HGV test. This agreement will help when crane MOTs are introduced.

Safe use of remote controls on lorry loaders

With the increased use of remote controls on cranes and several fatalities while using remote controls - Watson recommended looking at the ALLMI website which has several excellent items on how to use remote controls safely.

Elevating cabs

With elevating crane cabs becoming more common it should be noted that Loler regulation 9 (3) (a) (i)



Lifting people with cranes both for work and entertainment was discussed

requires lifting equipment used to lift people should be thoroughly examined at least every six months. The HSE has confirmed that this applies to elevating cabs on cranes. The rest of the crane - assuming it is not used to lift people with a man-riding basket - can still be examined every 12 months.

HSE updates

Brent Bolton of the HSE highlighted two incidents with tower cranes working on high cycle were duties at close to maximum rated capacity over an 18 month period. The cranes, which were lifting concrete segments between three locations on a tunnelling contract, suffered serious fatigue cracks. He emphasised the importance of knowing what end users will be using the cranes for.

In another two tower crane incidents - one in which a jib fell off and one where the jib collapsed - it highlighted poor maintenance procedures and record keeping. He said that all maintenance work needs to be correctly identified and carried out with correct records kept.



Brent Bolton of the HSE

Lifting persons?

Also if contemplating supplying cranes for entertainment purposes it should be noted that the documentation supplied by 'Dinner in the Sky' runs to 100 pages and

includes design criteria, tests to prove the structural integrity etc.... Crane companies should not underestimate the extra work that needs to be done before using a crane for entertainment purposes.

Fees for intervention

Bolton said it was too early to say whether the amount expected from FFI is being realised. Colin Wood reported that a CPA member charged with an accident had incurred FFI of more than £10,000 so far, and that insurance policies were unlikely to cover this, even when prosecution costs are covered. He said that insurers are going to wait at least a year to understand the risks involved. Speak to your brokers about coverage.

CAA Guidance on crane operations

The Vauxhall, London helicopter accident focussed attention on this area. All the information needed is in TIN (Technical Information Note) 039 Operating Cranes in the Vicinity of Aerodromes which was issued in July.



Mark Smiles of the CAA outlined the requirements of working near aerodromes.

Ground conditions

The Strategic Forum Plant Safety Group - has been working on a ground conditions document since 2011 - a draft document for public comment should be ready before the end of the year.