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The importance of tyre replacement and tyre pressures

Research undertaken by a major telehandler manufacturer indicates that a five percent reduction in tyre pressure from the manufacturer's specified values, can result in a 30 percent reduction in capacity at certain points on the load/height/radius curve which could result in the vehicle overturning. Because tyres deflect/distort under load they have a significant effect on telehandler stability and load carrying ability.

An example of the importance of properly planning tyre replacement occurred when a telehandler operator checked the tyre pressures on his machine. Having completed the checks, he was walking away when one of the tyres exploded.

Subsequent investigation revealed that the tyre, which had recently been replaced, was a 14 ply with a 3.5 tonne load rating, rather than the manufacturer's specification of 16 ply with a six tonne rating. The contractor also found that the



tyre had been ordered from the company's approved supplier by asking for a tyre for the model of the telehandler, without mention of ply

or load rating. A subsequent check of other machines found that a third of them were fitted with incorrect tyres.

Safe use of telehandlers updated

Telehandlers are involved in 20 percent of all mobile equipment deaths in the UK, with many fatal and serious injuries resulting from machines on the move, particularly when reversing. Incidents can also occur during lifting should the machine overturn, trapping the operator or bystanders. The dangers of overturning prompted a revision earlier this year of the Strategic Forum Plant Safety Group's Safe Use of Telehandlers in

Construction guide, which was first published in 2012.

The original guide was published to help the construction and related industries reduce the risk of accident and injury when working with telehandlers. The main changes affect sections dealing with tyre replacement and tyre pressures, to reflect the importance of tyres on the stability of a telehandler. More emphasis has also been added to the guidance on use of seatbelts as an essential safeguard against the operator being crushed should the machine overturn, while the section on suspended loads has also been extended to give better guidance to industry.

Seatbelts save lives...

A survey of reported telehandler accidents in the UK carried out by the Health & Safety Executive shows that in seven years there have been at least 72 lateral overturns of telehandlers. In three cases the operator was killed by being ejected from the cab and crushed. In a further two cases the operator was ejected from the cab and received serious crushing injuries. Had three of these operators been wearing their seat belts they would in all probability have lived.



CPA director Kevin Minton said: "The safe use of telehandlers guide was well received in the industry and the principles of the document have possibly saved lives. The 2013 revision with added safety points is another step forward in protecting the operator and other site personnel from the potential hazards involved when using these machines incorrectly. The most significant development is the understanding of the importance of tyre replacement and tyre pressures, and how these can drastically affect the performance and safety of the machine. However the group's work has not yet ended, and much remains to be done on suspended loads and in other areas."

The revised version of Safe Use of Telehandlers in Construction is published by the Construction Plant-hire Association on behalf of the Strategic Forum Plant Safety Group, and is available to download from the CPA website at www.cpa.uk.net.

New guideline for hydraulic hoses on mobile cranes

Exchange of hydraulic hoses has been discussed on and off over many years and the crane manufacturers under FEM have published a new guideline - FEM document 5.020 - which has a publication date of 1st November 2013.

The new guideline has been produced following a fatal road accident caused by a car skidding on oil that had allegedly leaked from a poorly maintained mobile crane. The guideline covers the service life of hydraulic hoses in addition to information regarding regular inspection, and replacement of hoses. This document applies to all hydraulic hoses in mobile cranes and is considered as complementary information to the machine operators' manual. It applies to all types of mobile crane as defined in EN13000 Cranes - Mobile Cranes. The full guide can be downloaded from the FEM website: http://fem.uniweb.be/index.php/prodGroups_crane/en/



Suspended loads

Following a meeting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF), the section on suspended loads has been extended to give better guidance on good industry practice. Further work with telehandler manufacturers is continuing in this area to help align industry best practice and training with manufacturers' information and instructions.