

Readers Letters



Hi Mark

I enjoyed your comment in the latest "Cranes and Access".

A few points I wanted to make.

What about other aerial work platform categories? The reasons that we might apply the suggestion of "scissor lifts should not be used unless there is a dedicated person on the ground, acting as a safety spotter" are the same for all platform categories. (Mobile boom static boom etc.)

IPAF training instructs trainees that an "emergency and rescue plan must be in place prior to MEWP use" this will include at least one person on the ground "in the vicinity" where the platform is being used; "in the vicinity" means being able to observe and respond in a timely manner should the operator require assistance. This is then applied in a risk assessment approach, to ensure that both the ability to be aware of the person at height has had an issue (this is a considerable part of the problem) and then being able to apply the rescue from height plan which includes understanding how the emergency lowering controls work. (PAL card operator training) I believe this is a more realistic and achievable application of the need to have a "spotter" on the ground. Naturally, we can employ additional methods as you mentioned secondary guarding technology is improving quickly and will often have a means by which the incident is alerted to others automatically. Personal devices such as "motionless or man down alert devices" are also a tool that can be considered in control measures, and even augmented reality to help responders understand what to do in the emergency lowering procedure.

Emergency lowering devices on work platforms can be a challenge to use, and some manufacturers' emergency lowering procedures from instructional information provided, positioning of controls, and then the sequence of operations required to be performed, leave a lot to be desired, this can be the case for a simple vertical lift (scissor lift) or a more complex articulating spider lift. It needs to be a focus, as an emergency situation demands a simplified task in response.

Improved standardised ground controls and emergency lowering controls would be a milestone in the development of our industry and indeed safe use control. We see less use of the written word and more use of symbols in safety decals and control use information, and this is very good in helping language issues and ease of understanding, however, we also see the need for standardisation on symbols used. Manufacturers' similar models e.g. slab scissors from 5.8 to 9 metres platform height will have many similarities but just as many differences in emergency lowering procedure. I would also make the same comment for platform control standardisation needs. Apart from manufacturers wanting to protect competitive advantage and differentiation, there are real electrical, hydraulic and mechanical issues to overcome for standardisation to be applied. However there is much that can be done already to improve the situation and bring controls across manufacturers and models to have more similarity than difference, even with design differences in place. The term 'Familiarisation' was employed to bring awareness to instructors and trainees, for the need to address these differences between manufacturer's controls and reduce the time it takes to get a person down from height in an emergency. Our aim should be to have the need for familiarisation reduced by way of more standardised controls.

Best regards

Robert Cavaleri

Regional Safety, Training & Compliance Manager

"The Manlift Way"

Chairman IPAF Council Middle East

The following is an open letter to Graham McPhail, head of education and training at the UK CITB, and his response, which he kindly copied us in on - all of which is self-explanatory and answers a question a number of people in the industry might have been thinking about.

Dear Mr McPhail,

In 2017 the CITB invested £1.2 million on 16 simulators for training plant operators at Bircham Newton.

Now that the 2020 vision for the CITB is to rid itself of direct training responsibilities could you tell me what will happen to the 16 simulators as you prepare to depart Bircham Newton?

Will the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership expect any return on their proportionate £450,000 investment in the simulators if sold?

Regards,

Mick Norton BEM

Dear Mr Norton,

I am very pleased to let you know that whilst CITB is continuing to divest from direct delivery of training it is still committed to supporting the continuation of Plant training at the Bircham Newton site. We fully anticipate the Plant Simulators will play a vital role in the continuation of Plant Operations training at Bircham Newton. On this basis, the investment from the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership is secured and will continue to support learners of all ages to enter the construction industry both now and into the future.

Thank you for your interest. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Kind regards

Graham McPhail

Head of Education and Training

CITB - National Construction College

The Future and Beyond

Dear Leigh,

I really appreciated the article on new technology on page 39 of the latest Cranes & Access magazine. This is an area that is rapidly changing the world we work in at such a pace that I find it baffling and hard to keep up with. The speed of development is, I think leaving a lot of these new 'tools' unused when they might well provide a massive benefit to the business, out of ignorance of them or the time and risk involved with giving them a try.

Articles like this do help at least bring it to the attention of you readers, something that is much needed for older and less tech savvy managers like myself, although it still leaves the challenge of getting around to doing anything about it. I don't know how many other people in my position are like me and shy away from talking about some of this stuff? I am not a dinosaur but I quickly get lost when those who are familiar start trotting out words and expressions which sound like an alien language.

I really think we need to be adopting new ideas and technology, but keeping on top of the blur of new things coming along - some of which come to nothing and some which take off and give early adopters a big advantage - is a nightmare which leaves me often taking a 'wait and see if it takes off' attitude to something that could benefit us now and make us far more efficient and customer friendly. I have no idea how this can change but would definitely like to see more coverage like this. Although perhaps a little knowledge is more dangerous?

Keep on doing what you do.

Regards

Stuart Franklin

The feature on page 39 of our November issue was entitled The Future and beyond... Our first attempt to address technology away from a review of it within a specific machine. We would appreciate hearing from any of our readers on whether articles like this are useful or not. Or for that matter any other subjects or themes you would like us to cover.

In the meantime the November issue or just this article is available online, at <https://www.vertikal.net/en/cranes-access/issue/342/>

Dear Sir,

I was pleased to see Crispin Steele's letter in the latest issue of your esteemed publication, regarding the prosecution and jailing of Andrew Weeks for forging operator licenses etc.. But this is just the tip of the iceberg - an iceberg that need not be so big if licences were properly checked. All too many job sites conduct only a cursory check of the licence or photocopy it with hardly a glance so it allows them to tick the box that says certification verified. Some of these forgeries are quite clearly not genuine when carefully inspected. New online databases now allow those responsible for checking credentials to check the validity quickly and easily. The question is how many of those responsible for finding qualified operators in a market where they are increasingly scarce will actually do a proper check?

Jeff Greenway

The letter above refers to the letter from Crispin Steele, a trading standards officer with Warwickshire County Council, which drew attention to the prosecution and jailing of Andrew Weeks for forging qualifications and operator certification cards including Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) cards.

Percy 'Ralph' Helm 1926 - 2018

Ralph Helm, former president and chairman of Manitowoc passed away on November 8th - he was 91. Helm played a pivotal role in the Manitowoc Crane division during the 1960s and 1970s, during which time the business saw revenues increase from \$18 million in 1962 to more than \$146 million. The 1980s were a tough time for the company with a deep recession and troubles in the oil and gas sector where most of its larger cranes were sold. He stepped down as chief executive in 1990 when he handed over to Fred Butler, remaining as chairman until 1993.

Helm was born on Christmas Day 1926 in Phoenix, Arizona to Percy Ralph and Maria Helm. He joined Manitowoc in 1961 as director of marketing. In 1965 he was promoted to vice president and became chief operating officer of the crane division in 1981 and chief executive in 1982. In 1986, he replaced John West - a member of the founding family - as chief executive of the holding company, adding the role of chairman in 1988. He stepped down as CEO in 1990 and retired in 1993.

He began his career 1949 as a crane oiler with Arizona Sand and Rock Company in Phoenix. In 1952 he became a sales trainee with Depco Equipment Company in Marion, Ohio and was promoted to sales representative for Detroit in 1957, leaving in 1961 for Manitowoc.

His wife Roberta passed away last year, but he leaves sons Robert Helm, Percy Ralph Helm III, John Helm and daughter Jane Louise Helm Sutton, along with eight grandchildren.



Ralph Helm (L) with president Ronald Reagan at a Commerce Department event honouring US companies for their efforts expanding trade overseas in 1983

Rocky Tan 1958 - 2018

Rocky Tan general manager and director of Malaysian access equipment specialist Eastway Engineering, passed away on the 24th November, following a short illness. He was just 60.

Tan was a pioneer of the scaffold and powered access industry in Malaysia, having been in the business since the early 1980s, if not before, initially as the Hiway alloy scaffold tower dealer moving into powered access with Genie AWP models and then becoming a dealer for Niftylift trailer and boom lifts, along with Denka atrium lifts. Eastway Engineering also runs a rental fleet in Malaysia, with Genie, Skyjack, Niftylift, Denka and JLG platforms, alongside its sales and service business and owns a distribution business in Singapore - Equipment Engineering.

He was a great advocate of improving safety when working at height and was actively involved in the establishment of the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF) in Malaysia.

The following comments were also received.

RIP Rocky, pioneer and a great role model for the industry.

Ali Palacioglu

RIP Rocky.

You held my hand and guided me through the ins and outs of the Malaysia market since way back in 2000. Your insights and wonderful tales made the travel through KL's notorious traffic a breeze. May you find only the best Durians in heaven!

Dion Calder