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New Crane Safety Guidance - Use of Cranes Beside Railways

The Construction Plant-hire Association's (CPA) Crane Interest Group has launched a new publication 'Good Practice Guide: Requirements for Mobile Cranes Alongside Railways Controlled by Network Rail'. The 29 page publication has been produced in close co-operation with Network Rail, based on the same principles as the previously published guidance on tower cranes alongside railways, and is free for anyone to download from the CPA website at <https://www.cpa.uk.net/crane-interest-group-publications-guidance/>

The guidance is clear in that mobile cranes and other mobile lifting equipment may present a significant risk to railway operations during activities such as rigging, use, maintenance and de-rigging and both Network Rail and crane users have a duty to ensure the safety of the railway. If the crane or its load falls onto the track, this could lead to a catastrophic accident, meaning it is essential that best practice is followed to eliminate or reduce this risk to as low as reasonably practicable. In doing so, the crane user will be able to demonstrate to Network Rail and other regulators that adequate measures have been put in place. Early consultation with Network Rail can ensure that any issues are identified and addressed well before any lifting operation starts, thereby avoiding any potential delays to projects.

The guidance is aimed at mobile lifting equipment, such as All Terrain, Rough Terrain or truck cranes, loader cranes, crawler cranes, spider cranes and self-erecting mobile tower cranes, as well as telehandlers and excavators used for lifting suspended loads.



The Good Practice Guide includes topics such as a hierarchy of risk elimination and reduction, detailed requirements for crane configuration and setting up, and lift planning - all with the emphasis on the additional risks of operating in close proximity to the railway. It also includes sample documents such as a foundation pre-rigging inspection report form.

New apprenticeships gain approval

The Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA) has given approval for delivery of the new Hire Controller Trailblazer Apprenticeship. This follows several years of hard work by an employer led Trailblazer Working Group which determined that a Hire Controller Trailblazer Apprenticeship programme was critical in order to attract new recruits to the construction equipment industry, as well as upskilling existing staff into a new role. Hire Controllers co-ordinate the equipment to customers and through a wide ranging skills set, play a key role within rental companies.

The Trailblazer Working Group was chaired by Kirsty Archbold-Laming, director of Southern Hoists, and included a number of employers from the rental sector including general rental, access, cranes, rail equipment, ground support, small plant and tools and concrete pumping. The CPA provided managerial and administrative

support throughout the process, while IPAF and the Hire Association Europe were also involved.

Archbold-Laming said: "We are extremely pleased to get the final approval for this new apprenticeship which will be a major step in helping recruit the new staff that we need in our sector. I would like to thank my colleagues in the group for their support and perseverance in getting it to fruition and IfA relationship manager, Jill Nicholls for the excellent support she provided."

In developing the standard, the group defined the required duties of a hire controller for the training syllabus, including the provision of technical information to customers, helping them select and use suitable equipment for the planned activities, ensuring the equipment being hired is compliant with Health and Safety requirements, completing contract documentation at both on and off hire stages, processing payments, calculating rental charges, damage charges, fraud prevention measures and insurance payments

and handling customer technical enquiries and complaints.

The Hire Controller Trailblazer Apprenticeship process will develop good behaviours including forming positive relationships with customers, working within a team and independently, developing a 'Health and Safety first attitude', being self-motivated, being respectful of equality and diversity and committed to continual personal and professional development.

This apprenticeship has been set at a level two and will take between 12 and 18 months to complete, with 20 percent of that time devoted to 'off-the-job' training. The IfA has placed it in funding band eight which equates to £5,000 that can be spent or claimed by employers. The standard containing the skills, knowledge and behaviours for the apprenticeship, as well as the assessment plan, can be downloaded from:



<https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/hire-controller-plant-tools-and-equipment/>

The Working Group's final task is to prepare the apprenticeship for delivery which will involve the three supporting federations, namely the CPA, IPAF and HAE, as well as the CITB and the training providers who participated in the group and should be ready shortly.

