

A direct result of the "crane hire" and "contract lift" guidelines issued by the Construction Plant-hire Association (CPA) last year has been the creation of Crane Advisory Services. C&A caught up with its founder, George Davis, to see what it has to offer.

Crane Advisory Services founder, George Davis.



Sound Advice

GEORGE DAVIS is no stranger to the crane industry. He started out almost 30 years ago on the hire desk of BCHC and has since held various positions including national heavy crane sales manager for Ainscough, regional heavy cranes director for Baldwins and sales director for Crane Services. His latest position, however, sees Davis take on the role as founding member of Crane Advisory Services -

"The company was formed in light of the recent changes of attitude with regards to crane hire and contract lift"

a one-stop advisory service to contractors and crane hirers covering all aspects of lift operations, including site surveys, method statement, risk assessment, lifting tackle arrangements, CAD drawings and the supply of crane supervisors and slingers.

"The company was formed in light of the changes of attitude in October last year by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), the Construction Plant-Hire Association (CPA) and major crane hirers with regards to "crane hire" and "contract lift", says Davis. "Guidelines issued by the CPA now state that if a customer hires a crane under CPA crane hire conditions it is the contractors responsibility to ensure that the hirer has an Appointed Person (AP) who can carry out the necessary planning and

risk assessment of the lift. If this is not the case, then the crane hire company should hire on a "contract lift" basis only, in which case they have a responsibility to provide the Appointed Persons (AP), crane and specific method and risk assessment, berthing study and also the necessary experienced personnel on site."

According to Davis, however, in many situations an AP provided by the contractor will not always possess the necessary skills to undertake the tasks required.

"The AP can delegate the duties on site to a crane supervisor but not the actual responsibilities," says Davis. "The AP must have been on site to properly plan the lift and assess the risks. Some contractors give out the name of an AP who may have never seen the site thinking that they are following the law correctly.

"The HSE is currently "blitzing" construction sites up and down the UK to ensure that this and other safety issues are being adhered to," he continues. "Prohibition and/or prosecution notices can be the result of a failure to control risks or comply with the laws.

"Even a three-day AP attendance course on its own does not necessarily mean that the person will be capable of planning all lifts. He/she must be competent and have a certain amount of technical knowledge and experience. The current law says that it is not essential to have attended the AP course to be an AP, but he/she must be competent, trained and assessed and have the practical and theoretical knowledge. The AP's performance should be periodically reviewed as different lifting operations may

require the selection of a new AP.

"The obvious aim of the new crane rules is to make the industry a safer place. Correct planning can save time, be cost effective and enable the contractor to give more information to the crane supplier for a better service.

"In light of these guidelines it became evident that some customers, although having the required trained personnel, did not have the specific crane experience or the resources to plan the lift, recognise the risks or have the crane specific knowledge to prepare the crane method statement. Neither did they want the extra cost of a "contract lift".

"Crane Advisory Services takes the task away from the customer and performs the AP's duties and responsibilities," says Davis.

"Customers are now able to hire the crane on a "hire contract" and pay the necessary insurance they require. Apart from obvious cost savings, the advantages of using the service are that we recommend the crane for the job and not necessarily the crane we have for the job, as may be the case with a hire company. Also, by having an independent method statement, if the crane supplier was to change at the last moment, there would be no need for the new supplier to visit the site and prepare a new method statement.

"I think that most crane hire companies are now adhering to the new crane rules, although some are flouting it for commercial reasons or simply do not have the resources for "contract lifting". The sooner everyone, contractors and crane hirers alike, follow the correct guidelines, the safer our industry will become."

C&A