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Providing Quality Insight to the Construction Industry

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“ There are many hazards associated with using cranes on construction sites.

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Crane Safety on a Construction Site

Cranes are massive pieces of equipment common to many construction sites that make lifting and transporting heavy materials much easier. While they are an important asset, there are hazards involving all aspects of crane use on a construction site.

SELECTING A CREW

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), only certified crane operators are allowed to operate cranes on a construction site.

Operators may be certified through a third-party organization or through their employer, provided the employer is qualified to train the operator.

In addition to one or more operators, there are other positions that need to be filled in order to use a crane.

A “competent person” must conduct shift and monthly inspections of all equipment. OSHA defines a competent person as a person, “capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous or dangerous to employees and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.”

OSHA defines a “qualified person” as a person “who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate or professional standing, or who by extensive knowledge, training and experience, successfully demonstrated the ability to solve/resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work or the project.” Qualified persons must conduct annual and comprehensive inspection of all equipment, along with duties associated with assembly and disassembly, fall protection, maintenance and repair and wire rope safety.

Signalpersons and maintenance and repair employees must be properly certified, as well.

PREPARING THE AREA

Cranes take up a lot of space, so preparing the area where a crane will be used is important to ensure the job gets done safely and efficiently. Consider the following when preparing the area:

- Is the ground firm and level? Softer ground is ideal for a crawler crane, while a mobile truck crane works best on hard, dry ground. OSHA mandates that ground conditions must be drained and graded before a crane can be assembled and used. In addition, supporting materials (blocking, mats, cribbing) should be used.

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- Can the crane safely rotate 360 degrees? Tower cranes and telescopic cranes often need to rotate in order to transport materials, so they need to be able to rotate a full 360 degrees. Make sure there are no power lines or buildings in the crane's path.
- Is there adequate space for the outriggers? Studies have shown that as many as 50% of crane accidents occur because the outriggers are not properly used. Some cranes come equipped with outriggers for added stability and to provide the maximum lifting power. Many of today's cranes have multiple outrigger positions to adapt to more ground conditions.
- Are access roads provided? Adequate access roads into and through the site are necessary for the safe delivery and movement of derricks, cranes, trucks, other necessary equipment and the material to be erected.

Once a suitable site for the crane has been selected, work can begin.

ACCESS AND EGRESS

One of the most overlooked hazards when using a crane is simply getting on and off the equipment for assembly, disassembly and use. For example, lattice boom cranes require employees to walk on the boom sections to install and remove pins for assembly and disassembly, creating a hazard. Equipment made after Nov. 8, 2011, must be manufactured with built-in walkways for this type of crane. For equipment made before Nov. 8, 2011, the employer must provide fall protection for employees who are on a walking or working surface with an unprotected side or edge more than 15 feet above a lower level when assembling or disassembling a crane, and more than six feet when performing non-assembly or -disassembly work.

Equipment that is manufactured after Nov. 8, 2011, must be equipped to provide safe access and egress between the ground and the operator work station(s), including the forward and rear positions. Walking and stepping surfaces, except for crawler treads, must have slip-resistant features, such as diamond plate metal, strategically placed grip tape, expanded metal or slip-resistant paint.

[Read full article on our blog](#)



Double-down on First-Year Training to Reduce Injuries

By Adam Ewing.,
INSURICA Content Creator

Travelers Insurance recently released a report, based on analysis of five years of data, showing that over a third of workplace injuries occur in the first year on the job.

The study suggests a profound need for more extensive training in the first year of employment across all industries but even more so in the construction industry.

STUDY RESULTS

- Injuries in the first year on the job accounted for 48 percent of claims and 52 percent of claim costs.
- The top three causes of first-year injuries were overexertion, slips/trips/falls, and being struck by an object.
- The average number of missed workdays associated with first-year injuries in construction was 98 days.
- The average cost of a workers compensation claim was more than double that of all industries combined.

While safety receives more attention today than ever before, much remains to be done. High turnover, labor shortages and pending retirements in the construction workforce guarantee a steady flow of new workers, which has the makings of a perfect storm.

Contractors must find ways to consistently and effectively provide training during the onboarding process and to reinforce those lessons weekly or even daily based on the task at hand.

New technologies provide ways to do this, and some even offer the training content.

MindForge is an IRMI sister company specializing in communications and training for field workers. Contractors can use technology such as this to provide training for new employees or to push training reinforcement to workers' mobile phones based on the work that is taking place on the site that day. Upload your own content or use the MindForge short training modules that demonstrate safe and unsafe work practices designed to reduce the most common types of injuries.



Keeping **U** In Mind

Heat Related Illness

By DeMarcus Strange, INSURICA Risk Management Services - Risk Control

The Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration recently announced its national emphasis program to protect workers from heat related injury and illness.

In line with this initiative, OSHA will be conducting inspections to target heat related incidents on the job.

What is the driving force behind this initiative?

“The three-year average of workplace deaths caused by heat has doubled since the early 1990s, Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh said. “Hazards aren’t limited to outdoor occupations, the seasons or geography. From farm workers in California, to construction workers in Texas and warehouse workers in Pennsylvania, heat illness – exacerbated by our climate’s rising temperatures – presents a growing hazard for millions of workers.”

As someone who has directly been impacted by heat before, I can say that this is an issue that should not be taken lightly. Employers should be conducting risk assessments to identify areas where their employees can be at risk of heat related injury, illness or even death.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 43 work-related deaths due to heat exposure in 2018. Fifty-seven deaths occurred to workers ages 55 to 64 from 2011 to 2019. During that period, 144 workers died from environmental heat exposure while they were engaged in construction, repair, or cleaning, and 54 workers died while conducting materials handling operations.

The Texas Department of Insurance emphasized that employers must give workers a safe workplace free from risks that may cause death or serious harm. That includes providing protection from extreme heat for workers, such as those who, perform physical labor, work in direct sun, work indoors near radiant heat sources, or work in spaces with little airflow.

Ignoring the significance of prevention has led to noticeable increases in worker compensation claims during the summer (high temperature) months.

In addition to implementing the proper risk controls, there are some fundamental methods of protection and prevention employers can use to protect their staff.

Responsible employers should ensure that all employees who may be exposed to heat risk are trained in identifying heat-related symptoms and methods of prevention. Careful thought should be given to how employers can keep from overheating. Some common methods include frequent breaks, having cooling units available and adjusting working shifts.

Sadly, most incidents occur due to poor hydration. Employers must confirm that employees have water readily available.

A common mistake is thinking that sport drinks, coffee and other liquids like soda can replace the need for water. It is common to find that victims of heat illness have relied solely on sports drinks as the main form of hydration. As a rule of thumb, drink three (same size) waters per sport drink.

Nothing replaces water!

For more information on how to adjust your program for the summer months contact a professional risk specialist.

[Read full post on our blog](#)



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