



In reality the basic rules are the same, however in recent years the CPA and its members have developed a code of practice that categorises crane jobs as either a contract lift or straight crane hire. The original idea was that unless the person/company hiring the crane had a competent appointed person and slinger/banksmen and were qualified to carry out a proper risk assessment and lift plan, the hire company should insist on a contract lift.

Cranes or Loaders what rules apply?

At the end of last year the CPA on behalf of its crane hire interest group began to lobby for larger lorry loaders to be treated as mobile cranes. Some members are concerned that these larger loader cranes are not required to meet the same rules as mobile cranes and have an unfair advantage.

Some crane hirers then began crying foul when, having refused a straight crane hire, lost the job to other hirers who would allow a regular crane hire. The HSE has now taken the unusual step of issuing a highly prescriptive letter to crane hirers stipulating that a written lift plan be required and the qualifications of the customers appointed person be checked out by the hire company.

While this might be sound advice for many lifts carried out by mobile cranes, there are a large number of jobs every day that are little more than offloading work for which the paperwork trail would seem excessive. In fact the HSE has argued itself that it is better to have a well planned lift with sound practical risk assessments than a strong paper chain covering the hirers back.

The question is that where do you draw the line? Is there truly one rule for one type of crane and another rule for others? Peter Oram of British Standards attempted to clarify the spirit and intention behind BS7172 part 4 the current standard for lorry loaders. In doing so however, he suggested that this standard never envisaged

the large loader cranes now on the market, and that it only covered the unloading of cargo to a point close to the vehicle. He seemed to suggest that loader cranes that had little or no cargo carrying capacity or that did more than just place the cargo on the ground should be treated as mobile cranes.

Alan Johnson, Chairman of Allmi recently wrote an open letter in order to clarify the Allmi position on this. The main text of that letter is as follows:

1. *BS7121 part 4 actually defines a lorry loader as "a combination of a loader crane fitted to a commercial vehicle or trailer which normally has a load carrying capability" It does not state that it must or should be commensurate to the load carrying capacity and the word "Normally" is quite pertinent in view of the fact that although larger cranes of this type are becoming more common, a conservative estimate would be that this is still no more than 3-5 percent of the loader cranes in service within the whole of the UK.*
2. *The operators that carry out work with this type of vehicle/crane are operating on sites where the same rules are applied for all contractors carrying out lifting operations. i.e that they must carry out risk assessments/method statements and have appointed persons etc.*
3. *Since 1995 all lorry loaders have had to comply with the machinery directive which requires them to be fitted with rated capacity indicators and emergency stops – the same as any other type of crane.*

In view of the above we as an association regard there to be a "level playing field" and consider the current wording of BS7121 Part 4 to be perfectly adequate in relation to this particular issue. These points have been made to Mr Oram at a recent ALLMI technical sub committee meeting that he attended. We agreed in this meeting that ALLMI would play a considerable role in any future review of this standard as has been the case in the past.

Alan P.Johnson
Chairman

Allmi stand at SED



Tina Morgan

For the first time ALLMI will be represented in its own right at the SED Show, from the 17th to the 19th May in Milton Keynes.

The ALLMI stand, number 159P will be manned by the General Manager, Tom Wakefield and new member of staff, Tina Morgan. As well as

promoting the HSE commended training scheme and technical literature. Allmi will also be promoting the planned expansion of its activities for the coming year and the enhanced benefits that this will provide for Members and Training Providers alike.

New Developments at ALLMI

Allmi and Allmi training Ltd are to merge into a single Ltd company this year and will be introducing a range of new programmes, one of which will be a new membership classification for Fleet owners of lorry loaders in order to create a forum for the exchange of ideas while giving the industry as a whole a stronger voice. Other plans include training courses for competent persons on examinations and load testing, more on this and other developments next month.

Final thought

The mobile crane hire industry is currently lobbying to maintain its right to use cheap red (rebated) diesel while all Lorry loaders use white, tax paid diesel and must be MOT tested. The level playing field comes back to mind?