

# Lorry driver jailed after loose crane kills schoolboy, 13

## An Accident Waiting to Happen!

**We all know how dangerous mechanical handling equipment can be when used incorrectly and lorry loader cranes are no exception. However, with lorry loaders spending a large part of their life travelling from one job or delivery to the next, negligence can not only lead to accidents in the workplace or on site, but also at high speed on the open highway.**

One of the most serious types of accident involving the use of lorry loaders is caused by the stabiliser legs being incorrectly stowed for travel. If the stabiliser leg is not properly locked into its stowing position, it can extend whilst the lorry is in transit, taking out everything in its path. This can have fatal consequences and what makes the situation even worse is that this type of accident will usually occur at speed, putting the lives of innocent pedestrians and motorists at risk.

In May 2000 in Stubbington, Hants, a lorry driver returning from a job had not engaged either the primary or secondary leg locks on his lorry loader. The unsecured stabiliser leg came out of its housing and struck two boys (aged 12 and 13) on the

back of the head. With their backs to the lorry, they didn't stand a chance. One of the boys died as a result of his injuries, leading to a two year jail sentence for the lorry driver in question.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated incident. Similar accidents have occurred, causing anything from serious injuries to damage to public and private property

It is the prevalence and seriousness of accidents involving stabiliser legs that has led the Vehicle & Operator Services Agency (VOSA) to introduce a change to the annual testing of vehicles. From April 2005, VOSA Inspectors will now include an examination of the stabiliser legs on lorry loaders. Inspectors will be looking for the presence and effectiveness

of leg locking mechanisms. This inspection will also be incorporated into roadside checks.

However, the types of locking mechanisms on stabiliser legs can vary. With manually deployed legs (i.e. stabiliser legs, which are extended by hand) the locks are purely mechanical, requiring both a primary and secondary locking device. On vehicles fitted with hydraulically deployed legs, manufacturers provide locking mechanisms, which can sometimes be hydraulic and operate by means of specialist valves. EN12999, the European Standard for Loader Cranes, states that a secondary locking device must be in place and that at least one of the stabiliser leg locking mechanisms shall be automatically operated (e.g. a spring operated cam lock and a automatic spring latch). However, loader crane manufacturers have been granted a temporary exemption on this issue on the understanding that EN12999 will soon be amended to clarify the position for hydraulic stabiliser legs and the locking mechanisms they incorporate.

The process for ensuring stabiliser legs are secured properly for travel

is a relatively simple one. It really comes down to good operator training. For this reason, the ALLMI Training scheme devotes an entire module to the subject of securing the crane for travel. This is particularly important given the hydraulic method of locking the hydraulic cylinder on the stabiliser leg as it is not immediately obvious - there is no visible locking device. For this reason it is crucial that operators understand the differences between the two types of stabiliser legs. Again this goes back to the importance of training and the need to be trained by an instructor who has a sound knowledge of lorry loaders. ALLMI Instructors have such knowledge.

The moral is "don't wait for the accident to happen, have all of your operators ALLMI trained to ensure that safety is your watchword".

For further information on training, please contact ALLMI Training Ltd.



## ALLMI at the CV Show

**In April, ALLMI exhibited at the Commercial Vehicle Show for the first time. Based in the new Skills Centre section of the show, the ALLMI stand was a hive of activity, with an abundance of interest in the HSE commended training scheme, as well as many enquiries about membership of the Association. Literature on display included the ALLMI Membership booklet and technical information in the form of the ALLMI Code of Practice. ALLMI had two video displays; one**

**with a rolling presentation containing pictures of the accidents that can happen when operators are not properly trained, and the second showing the Operator Training film 'And That Was It!'**

The stand was manned by General Manager, Tom Wakefield, with new member of staff Tina Morgan. In addition, they were helped by a guest instructor on each of the three days with David Ottaway, Alan Roberts and Peter Brammah representing T H White (Palfinger), Atlas Terex and John Turner Hydraulic Engineers, respectively.

Visitors can expect to see the same format at the forthcoming SED Show, where the ALLMI stand number will be 159P.