

SAFETY ALERT (ALT-006)

Machine Transport Routes: Mobile Cranes

BACKGROUND

A serious incident recently occurred where a 60 tonne (approximately) mobile all terrain crane veered off a single track road whilst travelling in 'transport mode' from one site to another and overturned. The operator was fortunate not to receive any injuries as a result of this dangerous occurrence. The results of an investigation into the incident were not conclusive but it was thought that the operator could have lost concentration during operations. The small print on the specific hire contract used placed responsibility for the recovery of the vehicle, the damage caused, any pollution and so forth, once off the Queen's highway, onto the hirer – the financial loss incurred was considerable.



PRACTICAL GUIDANCE

Only trained and competent operators should operate mobile cranes and any operation should be accompanied by a suitable risk assessment. The nationally recognised qualification for competence in Britain is a Scottish/National Vocational Qualification (S/NVQ) Level II Plant Operations.

The mobile crane should be regularly maintained so that it is working safely and efficiently and a machine inspection should be conducted by the operator at the start of each shift, with an appropriate record of this kept. Any maintenance or inspection undertaken should follow guidance as laid out by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM).

Mobile phones, two way radios or other such devices that could distract the operator should not be used during machine operation unless they form part of the safe system of work procedure employed.

Transport routes should be regularly maintained and suitable for the task to be undertaken and the type of mobile crane using them, i.e. with respect to size, weight, dimensions and any specific safety features to be used, for example, outriggers. If a transport route is unsuitable for the mobile crane then an alternative machine, route or method of work should be considered.

Pot holes and ruts appearing in the transport route should receive immediate attention with regards to their repair. Any obstruction or debris must be cleared immediately once reported.

Transport routes should not slope against the direction of travel.

When travelling across a work site, the site rules should always be observed and if the operator is in any doubt then additional advice and guidance should be sought from site management. Site travel speeds should always be observed and if in any doubt, travel speeds should be kept to a minimum.

When working at the side of an excavation or embankment, suitable edge protection must be used along the transport route. In the quarrying industry, the height of the edge protection should be a minimum of 1.5m or at least the size of the radius of the largest wheel on site, where this is greater than 1.5m.

Pedestrians must be segregated from transport routes and these routes should have good clear signage and appropriate traffic control measures.

Further guidance on the safe use of cranes can be found in the British Standard 'BS7121: Code of Practice for Safe Use of Cranes' and in the OPERC publication 'A Voluntary Code of Practice for the Safe Use of Cranes in and Around Airports' which is available from the OPERC on-line bookshop at: www.operc.com.



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