



COMPANY NAME: _____

Volume 32

FEBRUARY 2015

Crane Collapse!

“Crane collapse”—no one ever wants to read those words in a headline or, even worse, experience a collapse firsthand. That’s because a crane collapse usually means loss of life, serious injuries, and catastrophic damage to the crane and usually to surrounding structures and property. When a crane collapses, it’s chaos.

Today’s cranes are designed with greater capacities, have longer reaches, and continue to be indispensable workhorses for the construction industry. That’s why many cranes today cost in the millions of dollars. But as essential as a crane is to construction, it can also be a very dangerous piece of equipment.

There are inherent hazards present during normal operation of cranes. After all, various physical principles govern a crane’s mobility and safety during lifting operations. These principles include: stability, maximum loading, and general structural integrity. These are not just general ideas or guidelines, they are specific and critical rules—like the law of gravity. If you or someone else fails to follow the procedures that support these principles, the crane you depend upon may collapse and people will likely die.

One of the most common factors in crane collapses is overloading. Overloading occurs when the rated load capacity of a crane is exceeded. When an excessive load is being lifted or maneuvered, structural failure can result. Every crane’s load chart will tell the operator how much weight the crane can handle. Before every lift, the operator

must correctly calculate the weight of the load, make absolutely sure that the load is within the crane’s rated capacity, and adjust the crane settings accordingly.

Several factors affect the stability of a crane, and not just the relationship between the load, its counterweight, and the angle of the boom. The crane’s stability is affected by the support on which the crane is resting. Cranes can collapse due to soft ground or voids underneath an outrigger or track. In areas with soft ground, mats or blocking must be used to distribute the crane’s load and maintain a level and stable footing.

Here are several practices to help prevent crane collapse:

- Follow the manufacturer’s specifications.
- Make sure you have the training and qualifications you need before you operate any crane.
- Make sure your crane is level, and that it is located on a firm and stable footing.
- Plan lifting operations carefully.
- Never exceed load chart capacities.
- Fully extend outriggers.

SAFETY REMINDER

Crane safety isn’t just for the operator. When working around cranes, stay alert and never work or walk under a load.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

S.A.F.E. CARDS® PLANNED FOR THIS WEEK:

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Are You Using Your Fall Protection Gear Correctly?

Wearing fall protection is useless if you're wearing it incorrectly. So how are you supposed to know whether you're wearing it correctly or not? There are several resources available to you to ensure that you are protecting yourself from the hazards of falls.

First, you have the manufacturer's guidelines, recommendations, and instructions. You should never just throw on a new fall protection device and hope for the best or attempt to figure it out as you go along. That's kind of like throwing yourself off a building and hoping there's something there to save you in the end. Take time to read all the information and get answers to all the questions you might have about the equipment.

For instance, you should be able to answer the following questions: Are there any visible defects? Are all the snap hooks working properly? Do they require a double movement to open and close? Will the components prevent accidental roll-out from occurring? Is all the stitching intact? Does the harness fit properly? Is the chest connection damaged? Is the lanyard damaged? Is it too short? Is it too long?

Another way to make sure you're using your gear correctly is to attend a fall protection training class. Many equipment manufacturers and suppliers offer this type of training at no cost. They will often come to the jobsite to hold a training session. There's no better place to learn about the gear than

the jobsite—and nobody better to train you than the manufacturer of the fall protection gear. Check to see if your employer offers fall prevention training courses. Find out the schedule and be sure to attend.

One additional way to know whether you're using your gear correctly is to ask your co-workers. Check each other's fall protection gear before you start work. Ask your supervisor where fall protection is required on the job. You can also talk to your foreman or supervisor about where you're going to tie off. Make sure the anchorage point meets the load requirements and has been approved.

Remember the ABCs of fall arrest systems. **A** is for **anchorage**. An anchorage is a secure point of attachment for a fall arrest system. An anchorage should be able to support 5000 pounds. **B** is for **body support**. A full body harness provides a connection point on the worker for the personal fall arrest system. **C** is for **connectors**. Connectors are devices that connect the full body harness to an anchor system—these include the lanyard, snap hooks, lifeline, etc. For more on fall protection, see OSHA's Standard 1926.502.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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Get all the training available so you can look out for yourself and your co-workers. Say something if you notice others using fall protection gear incorrectly or ineffectively.

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Prescription & Over-the-Counter Medicines

Just because your doctor prescribed some medicine, doesn't mean that it cannot cause problems. All medications, and even some supplements, can be dangerous. Think about some of the warnings on prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications:

- **May cause drowsiness.**
- **Use caution when driving a motor vehicle or operating machinery.**
- **Dizziness may occur.**

Now consider how dangerous it would be for you to perform some of your daily tasks with reduced coordination, slow reactions, or when you're drowsy or dizzy.

You don't want to be operating a crane and find yourself feeling lightheaded. You certainly don't want to be working with a circular saw and start getting drowsy or shaky. The fact is, whether you're taking prescription or over-the-counter medication, your ability to perform your job safely can be affected.

The most important thing you can do when taking any medication is to **read the label first**. You wouldn't work with a hazardous material without reading the material safety data sheet, so don't put something in your body without reading the label.

Labels provide you with important and life-saving information such as the product name, the proper use of the medicine, warnings, possible side effects, directions on how to take it,

how much to take, drug interactions, and other dos and don'ts. Be sure to read and understand everything about the medication before you take it.

Aside from reading the label, you should also ask questions. If you are under a doctor's care and she prescribes medication, tell her that you are in the construction industry. Ask about the side effects of the medication. If you are taking OTC medication, consult your pharmacist. To avoid dangerous drug interactions, tell both your doctor and pharmacist about any other medications you're taking, including vitamins and other supplements.

Even with all this information, it's up to you to take the medication properly. Follow all directions and recommendations. Some medications must be taken with food, and others before you eat. Some pills should be swallowed whole, and never chewed or crushed. Many labels warn you to avoid drinking alcohol while you're taking the medication. Take all medication as directed and never take more than the recommended dose. Never misuse or abuse any medication.

Drugs don't have to be illegal to be dangerous. When you're sick and taking medication, sometimes the safest thing you can do is stay home and rest.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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In case of overdose, get medical help immediately and call the Poison Control Center (1-800-222-1222).

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Dollies Can Lighten the Load

It's really easy to injure your back. And back injuries hurt! Even lifting a small object incorrectly can strain your back and cause you pain. You can avoid many back injuries by using a dolly, hand truck, or other mechanical device; by following safe work practices; by using proper lifting techniques; and by asking for help when a load is too heavy for you to lift alone. The best way to protect your back is to know your limits.

Construction work requires a lot of material handling. You probably spend lots of time lifting, carrying, pulling, and pushing materials to wherever you'll be using them. You probably also deal with objects of awkward shapes and sizes. And too often you're alone and don't have someone around to help you out. One easy solution to reduce stress on your body is to use a dolly or hand truck.

Have you ever watched a soda delivery person or professional movers work? They can move multiple cases of drinks or a heavy piece of furniture with the greatest ease and efficiency using a hand truck or dolly. It's kind of amazing how many heavy boxes they can carry on a hand truck. They load it up, balance the load, and off they go rolling away.

The key to this material handling success is the same as with any other task—using the right tool for the job. A hand truck is a simple tool made of two wheels and some welded aluminum side rails with a handle, but it can be a big help when moving almost any material. Four-wheeled dollies and carts also help eliminate strain on the back. They allow you to

roll boxes, objects, and other materials across the jobsite with relative ease. Since the weight of the load is carried by the cart's wheels, it's much easier and safer for one person to move a heavy load.

Using a dolly, hand truck, or other device doesn't eliminate all hazards. You must still be cautious. Make sure the load is securely placed on the dolly or truck so that it will not shift or fall over as you travel. Be careful not to place your hands or fingers where they could be pinched or crushed as you move the load. Keep your eyes on the path of travel. A misplaced piece of pipe or block of wood could cause a wheel to stop suddenly or you could stumble or trip. Move slowly and carefully, and watch for obstacles in your path.

When lifting materials on and off the dolly, be sure to use proper lifting techniques. Keep your back straight, bend your knees, lift with your legs, and keep the object close to your body. It's true that material handling devices do the work of two or three people. But just because you're using a dolly doesn't mean you won't have to ask a co-worker for help. Get help if you need it. A little help from a friend will make the work a little easier and a lot less painful.

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SAFETY REMINDER

You might consider renting a dolly or hand truck when moving or for home renovation projects. The cost of the rental is far less expensive than the time off and medical bills caused by a back injury.

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