Weekly Safety Meetings Select Edition
Safety Training for the Construction Industry

Paragon Services Engineering

Rigging II

A rigger is a construction worker who specializes in the lifting and moving of extremely large and heavy objects. Riggers play a major role in the safe operation of cranes. They work together with the crane operator and the signal person to complete lifts safely. A rigger is responsible for making sure every load is rigged properly. One wrong move could lead to a disastrous, possibly deadly, lift.

There are many factors that a rigger must take into consideration before any lift. **A rigger must:**

- Know the weight of the load.
- Locate the center of gravity of the load.
- Double-check weights with shipping scale weights.
- Consider both the weight and the configuration of the load while planning a lift.
- Inspect the load and rigging gear prior to use.
- Determine whether attachment points are provided on the load.
- Ensure that attachment points on the load are intended to handle the entire weight and not just a component.
- Account for the weight of all rigging components when determining the final weight of the load. This includes the jib boom, wire rope, hooks, shackles, and spreader beams.
- Select a hitch that will hold and control the load.
- Select the sling best suited for the load.
- Protect the sling from sharp edges or corners.
- Know the limitations of hoisting devices.
- Make appropriate crane capacity deductions based on the crane manufacturer's load chart.
- Watch for overhead power lines. Keep loads at least 10 feet away from any power lines.
- Think about the load's path of travel. A properly rigged load will need the least amount of maneuvering by the crane operator.
- Determine whether wind, temperature, humidity, or rain will call for special handling requirements.

Whether you're a rigger or not, anytime a crane is carrying a load overhead, make sure everyone is kept clear of the lift area. All lifts should start and stop slowly and smoothly. Always use the proper hand signals. Never leave a load unattended. Make sure safety requirements are met at all times. Don't forget: the law of gravity judges rigging and crane mistakes immediately and without leniency.

Proper, safe rigging takes skill, care, and knowledge—it's a lot more than just tying up loose ends. A well-trained rigger can take pride in knowing that he is making lifting operations much safer.

SAFETY REMINDER

Whether you're rigging a load or tying stuff down in the bed of your pickup truck, always use appropriate equipment. Never use extension cords, wire ties, or clothesline to secure, lift, or rig a load.

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Scaffolding I

A scaffold is a very common and useful tool in construction and, like every other tool we use, it must be in good condition and used properly. If a scaffold is assembled improperly or is erected on a base that is unstable, collapse of the structure is almost certain. A collapse can injure the people on the scaffolding as well as others on the ground or lower levels; not to mention the property damage it could cause. Let's review a few key points related to scaffold safety.

1. Erecting and Dismantling—When either erecting or dismantling supported scaffolds, OSHA requires a competent person to supervise the operation. This same competent person must also determine what type of fall protection is necessary and see that a safe means of access is provided for workers.
2. Inspections—Before each work shift and after any occurrence that could affect the structural integrity of the scaffold, a competent person must inspect the scaffold and its components for any visible defects. This competent person must have the authority to correct any problems. You should also inspect the scaffold personally; after all, it's your life that's on the line.
3. Training—Employers must train each employee who works on a scaffold about the hazards they may encounter and procedures to control those hazards.
4. Fall Protection—OSHA requires fall protection for everyone working on a scaffold at a height of 10 feet or more above a lower level. In many cases you may be required to wear a full body harness.
5. Guardrails—The height of the top rail for scaffolds manufactured **after** January 1, 2000 must be between 38 and 45 inches. When the crosspoint of crossbracing is used as a top rail, it must be between 38 and 48 inches above the work platform. Mid rails must be installed approximately halfway between the top rail and the platform. When the crosspoint of crossbracing is used as a mid rail, it must be 20 to 30 inches above the work surface.
6. Overhand Bricklaying—Overhand bricklaying from supported scaffolds requires a personal fall arrest system or guardrails on all sides except the side where the work is being done.

Keep in mind that when you're working on a scaffold you are more than likely working above someone else. Be sure that tools and materials are secure so they can't fall off your scaffold and injure someone below. More information on scaffold safety regulations is available beginning at 29 CFR 1926.450.

SAFETY REMINDER

Before moving a mobile scaffold, check that your route is clear and free of hazards.

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Forklifts

A forklift is an industrial vehicle with a power-operated, forked platform used to lift and transport materials. Forklifts are also called powered industrial trucks. They come in a variety of designs and sizes, and may operate on batteries or propane. However, on construction sites, forklifts are most commonly powered by gasoline and diesel fuel.

Some of the most common hazards associated with forklifts include overturning, falls from the forklift, and workers being struck by materials or by the forklift itself.

OSHA requires that forklift operators be over 18, trained, and authorized before they use the equipment. Operators must pass written and operational evaluations. Once you have been qualified to operate a forklift, you must act responsibly to keep yourself, your co-workers, the load, and the equipment safe during operations.

Before you make a lift, consider the following factors:

- Capacity of the forklift: Will it handle the weight and size of your load?
- Characteristics of the load: Is the load top-heavy or awkward?
- The route you will travel: Are there obstacles, bumps, ramps, narrow passageways, or people to consider?

Before starting a forklift, remember these important responsibilities:

- Pre-Use Inspection: Check the physical condition of the forklift prior to operation.
- Visual Pre-Check: Check for leaks, missing or loose bolts and anchor pins; check wheels, tires, batteries, and hoses.
- Operational Pre-Check: Check the horn, backup alarm, lights, all brakes, lift and tilt mechanisms, steering, seat belt, and fire extinguisher.
- Safe Operating Procedures: Keep loads low to ensure they don't obstruct your vision. Be sure the load is stable and secure. Avoid sharp turns and fast speeds. Wear your seat belt. Raise and lower the load only when you are stopped.
- Proper Shutdown: Bring the forklift to a complete stop, lower the forks, set the brakes, and then shut the ignition off. Never leave a forklift running while it is unattended.
- Refueling: Lifts powered by propane, gasoline, and diesel should be refueled only in designated areas.
- Maintenance: Follow the manufacturer's specifications.

SAFETY REMINDER

When things are going badly, don't panic.
Never jump from a tipping forklift.

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Work Zone Safety II

According to data from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration an average of 3 people die every day in work zone accidents. The number of vehicles on the road is growing every year, drivers' commutes are getting longer, and drivers have to deal with more distractions. On top of the already crowded roads there are more new construction projects starting up all the time. Work zone safety needs to be a priority and you can help.

As a worker, you need to constantly be on the lookout for danger. When working in a highway construction zone, always be aware of your surroundings, wear a reflective vest and any other required personal protective equipment, and keep your body behind a substantial barrier whenever possible. If roadwork is being performed at night additional concerns should be addressed: lighting is limited and therefore visibility is limited, drivers are more likely to be tired, and some drivers may have been drinking. All of these increase the danger to workers. Motorists don't usually want to "give you a brake" by slowing down in a work zone.

Work zones are dangerous for both highway workers and motorists. As a motorist, remember that hazards begin with the first warning sign or flashing light and don't end until the "end construction" sign. While you are traveling through a work zone you must obey all signs, channeling devices, and pavement markings. It is very important that you slow to posted speed limits within the work zone as soon as possible. Refrain from using cell phones while in a construction zone; they create another distraction that could prove dangerous to you, other drivers, and road workers.

Contractors, workers, and the public do have something in common; none of them want to be involved in a highway accident. Work zone safety must be emphasized at all levels. Traffic laws should be strictly enforced within all work zones. Local officials should do their part to inform the community of all upcoming roadwork. Contractors need to erect and maintain proper signs and make sure flaggers do their jobs. Workers need to protect themselves by wearing reflective vests and being aware of their surroundings. Drivers need to choose other routes or be prepared for slower traffic and delays. Working together we can improve work zone safety and reduce fatalities.

SAFETY REMINDER

Anytime you're driving ask yourself, "Is getting there faster worth risking my life?"

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