

News release

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HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE ANNOUNCES NEW TOWER CRANE REGULATIONS

Detailed recommendations for a statutorily-based tower crane register have been agreed today (25 November) by the HSE Board following a three-month public consultation. These details will now be put to Ministers for approval.

HSE received 100 responses; from trades unions, construction contractors and other stakeholders.

The new Regulations, developed by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are intended to come into force in April 2010 and cover conventional tower cranes on construction sites.

The register is in response to increasing public concern about tower crane safety. Eight people have been killed in incidents involving tower cranes since 2000, including one member of the public.

The new proposed regulations, which are designed to be easy to follow:

- place the duty to notify on the employer
- require notification of the relevant information within 14 days of thorough examination of the crane
- require cranes already erected when the Regulations come into force to be registered within 28 days
- allow electronic notification via the HSE website.

Details that would have to be notified to HSE are:-

- the site address where the tower crane is being used
- the name and address of the crane owners
- details needed to identify the crane
- the date of its thorough examination
- details of the employer for whom the examination was made
- whether any defects posing a risk of serious injury were detected.

All details notified to HSE would be contained in a register that will be open to public scrutiny. Registrations would be subject to an administration fee of £20.

Philip White, HSE Chief Inspector of Construction said:

“There have been a number of high profile and tragic failures of tower cranes in recent years and there is widespread interest in finding ways to improve safety. The

public consultation has helped us to develop a proportionate response to an established risk.

“We have learnt a great deal from recent incidents and are working together with hirers, suppliers, manufacturers and stakeholders to ensure that anything we have learnt is acted upon.”

Around 1800 conventional tower cranes are thought to be operated in Britain, with around 1300 in use at any one time.

Following Ministerial approval, HSE plans to send out information to all duty-holders over the next few months.

The register is part of a package of measures which involves HSE and the construction industry continuing to work together to address issues around tower cranes: creating a competency requirements framework for crane erectors and dismantlers; undertaking more research into the effect of wind loading on cranes; consideration of the adequacy of crane design standards; greater research to improve understanding of crane accidents at an international level; greater promotion of the industry safe crane campaign to improve public confidence in crane safety.

The new registration site is scheduled to be launched on 6th April.

Notes to Editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to prevent death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training, new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement.
2. The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 require tower cranes to be thoroughly examined by a competent person before first use and on a periodic basis (6 or 12 months depending if they are used to lift persons) or in accordance with a written scheme of examination.
3. A summary of the consultation findings will be available shortly.
4. There are two main types of tower cranes, known as conventional (or 'assisted-erected') and 'self erectors'. Conventional cranes are transported in pieces and assembled on site. Self-erecting tower cranes are complete units that are brought to site and then unfolded.
5. Interviews available on request

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