

It is common practice to place portable compressors and other mechanical plant in steel drip trays to avoid environmental contamination from leaking lubricating oil and fuel, on construction sites. Sometimes these trays are supplied with lifting eyes and are marked with a rated lifting capacity. There is consequently a temptation to lift the equipment in the tray, using the tray's lifting points. A recent incident demonstrates the hazards involved in doing this:-

A towable wheeled compressor was being lifted by a tower crane on a multi storey housing site. The compressor had been placed in a spillage tray (Fig. 1), which was clearly marked with a rated capacity of 2 tonnes and was attached to the hook of the tower crane with a four leg set of chain slings. The slings were attached to the tray by lifting points at each corner of the tray, which had an upstand of about 200mm. The hand brake on the compressor had not been applied. As the tray and compressor were lifted and slewed, the compressor moved, altering the centre of gravity of the load and causing the tray to tilt. The compressor then fell approximately 1.5 metres from the tray onto the formwork of the first floor (Fig. 2), broke through the decking (Fig. 3) and landed on the ground floor (Fig. 4). Fortunately no one was injured. The compressor was fitted with a lifting eye, but it was not used.



Fig. 1

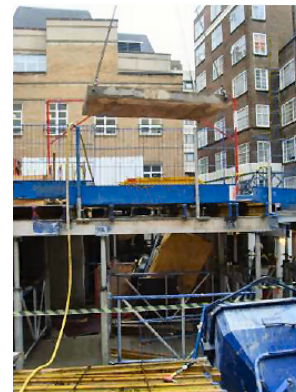


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

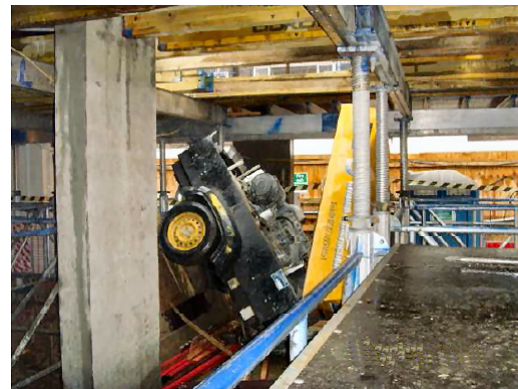


Fig. 4

- **Compressors and other portable plant must be lifted using the lifting eye(s) provided on the equipment**
- **Consider the purchase of mechanical plant with built in drip trays**
- **Drip trays should be empty when they are lifted, unless they have been designed and rated for lifting and have arrangements for securing the load**
- **Loads must be always be secured before any lifts take place**