

Toolbox Talks

Working Safely Around Suspended Loads



It may be a load under a mobile crane, an overhead hoist in the shop, or a culvert or trench box under a loader bucket, but anytime there is a load in the air, there is a very serious hazard. Everyone, including the equipment operator, rigger, and other workers in the area must pay special attention if everyone is going to go home at the end of the shift!

Federal and State safety standards make it illegal to:

- Move an overhead load over people
- Allow people to pass under a suspended load
- Leave a load in the air without the operator at the equipment / hoist controls

Also, employees should NEVER guide a suspended load by putting their hands on it. It only takes a small mistake by the operator, or a small slip, to seriously injure or kill someone this close to the load.

For everyone's safety, when lifting something with a hoist, crane, boom, loader, or backhoe, always:

- ✓ Secure the area where the load will be moved. **Keep people out.**
- ✓ Be sure that nobody gets under a load
- ✓ Make sure that the load will not pass over anyone
- ✓ Make sure that signal persons or riggers are always in clear view of the operator.
- ✓ Inspect and use proper slings, lifting chain, and hardware to support the load. Always limit the load to the lowest rated part of the lifting system.
- ✓ Use tag lines, if necessary, to guide the load. **Never use your body.**
- ✓ If you must do fine alignment on a suspended load, use a 2 X 4 or something to push, not your hand.
- ✓ Always hang slings or chains when not in use. Lower forklift forks to the ground when not in use, even if they have a load.
- ✓ Be sure that everyone around a suspended load is wearing a hard hat. One in five employees killed in falling load accidents are struck by flying parts and pieces of rigging.

REMEMBER: "The Law of Gravity has been upheld on every appeal."

