

SAFETY ALERT!!!

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LIFTING EQUIPMENT IN CONSTRUCTION

The use of lifting equipment and lifting tackle on construction sites is pretty much the norm on most high-rise buildings and this could include a tower crane, mobile cranes, teleporter's, and vehicles off-loading material via a truck mounted crane.

The focus of the article is on truck mounted cranes and in particular cranes mounted on brick delivery vehicles.

Notwithstanding the requirements of the National Road Traffic Act, a delivery vehicle using a truck mounted crane needs to comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as well as the Construction Regulations and the Driven Machinery Regulations. Set out below are the requirements of each specific piece of legislation:



OHS Act:

- ❖ Section 8 refers to the duties of the employer and it notes that the employer must identify hazards and the associated risks and put measures in place to mitigate the risk associated.
- ❖ The employer must have procedures in place to mitigate the risk.
- ❖ Employees must be trained on these procedures.
- ❖ Section 9 refers to the employers' general duties to persons other than his or her employees.
- ❖ It states that the activities of an employer must not expose other persons to hazards which could affect their health and safety.

Construction Regulations:

- ❖ Section 23 refers to construction vehicles and the management of these vehicles.
- ❖ A vehicle delivering goods to a construction site is deemed to be a construction vehicle by definition in the Construction Regulations and must therefore comply with the requirements of this section.
- ❖ Some of the requirements are as follows:
 - Must be operated by a person who has received appropriate training.
 - Must be well maintained.

- Must be checked daily by the operator and records of these checks must be kept in a register.
- Must be fit for purpose.
- ❖ The movement of vehicles on site must be properly controlled.

Driven Machinery Regulations:

- ❖ The operator of the truck mounted crane must be in possession of Code C32 "license" to operate the truck mounted crane in terms of the DMR.
- ❖ The operator must also have additional training when a brick grab is being used to off-load bricks.
- ❖ The above training is valid for 24 months.
- ❖ The crane must be load tested every 12 months by a Lifting Machine Inspector (LMI) who is registered with ECSA.
- ❖ The LMI must be employed by a Lifting Machine Entity (LME) and this company must be registered by the Chief Inspector of the Department of Employment and Labour.
- ❖ The crane should be inspected 6-monthly to ensure that it remains in a serviceable condition.
- ❖ Any lifting tackle attached to the crane must be checked on a quarterly basis to ensure that it remains serviceable and records of these checks must be kept on file.

So why the long story about legal requirements?

During my many visits to sites I often observe bricks being off-loaded by truck mounted cranes. I am often shocked at the condition of these vehicles and cranes, as well as the ability of some of the operators to use the crane correctly.

With 14 years of experience in the brick industry, I believe I am qualified to comment on the challenges faced by brick companies and their delivery vehicles.

Most brick manufacturers use sub-contractors to deliver their products and thus do not have control over the vehicles. This is left up to the operator of the vehicles doing deliveries on their behalf and they rely on these contractors to ensure their vehicles comply. However, suppliers need to consider that the vehicles used are associated with their business and they should thus insist that the vehicles remain in good order. After all, this is a direct reflection on their brand.

A contractor receiving bricks should at least insist on the following:

- ❖ A register must be kept in the vehicle indicating the daily checks.
- ❖ The driver of the vehicle must have a certificate of training.
- ❖ The crane operator must be in possession of a valid certificate of training.
- ❖ All equipment used to off-load bricks must be in a good condition.
- ❖ The crane and all the hydraulic hoses must be in a good condition with no oil leaks.
- ❖ The truck must use the outriggers to stabilize the vehicle while offloading.
- ❖ The vehicle must be on firm level ground and the outriggers placed on firm level ground.
- ❖ The bricks must be placed on level ground capable of carrying the load.
- ❖ Where possible, bricks should not be double stacked.
- ❖ A method statement and risk assessment must be available for the tasks to be performed.

The above might look like a bit of a mouthful, but contractors need to remember that what happens on your site remains your responsibility. By knowingly allowing an unserviceable vehicle and an unlicensed operator to offload bricks with an untested crane, puts the contractor at risk should an accident occur. No

amount of paperwork and written agreements will cover you in this situation and without launching into another quote from the Act, Section 37 of the Act clearly sets out the duties of everyone involved.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information on the subject. We will be more than happy to assist you.

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