Conveyors, Cranes, and Slings



What's at Stake?

Materials handling is an essential task in any industry and covers everything from moving steel pipes by crane to manually hauling bags of concrete. Whatever your workers are moving or assembling, this common task also involves some of the most common costly injuries.

Besides back injuries incurred while lifting, workers also suffer injuries from using equipment designed to move materials such as conveyors, cranes, and slings.

What's the Danger?

Failing to properly secure a load of material, pallets, boxes, or other items can result in damaged product and equipment, spills and leaks, and falling objects that could cause slips, trips, and falls, or fatal crushing injuries. Conveyors have their own set of dangers including entanglement in the moving belts and rollers.

How to Protect Yourself

Conveyors

Possible injuries include hands and fingers being pinched in the conveyor, being struck by falling material, or being caught and dragged into the conveyor.

- Don't lose your life over loose clothing, jewelry, or neck lanyards used for badges.
    - This includes hooded sweatshirts or other clothing with hoods or ties that dangle or hang.
    - Tie back long hair and keep it from hanging down your back or in front of your face.
- Emergency stops should be installed so they can be easily accessed along the conveyor belt.
    - Locate the emergency buttons or pull cords so you can reach them quickly in an emergency.
    - If you don't see an emergency stop or one isn't easily reached, talk to your supervisor or safety contact (safety manager, safety committee member).
- For areas where the conveyor passes over work areas, guards must be installed to prevent material from falling on you and other workers below.

Cranes

- Never operate a crane unless you've had training.
- Plan each lift and take time to know what you are lifting, how much it weighs, and the rated capacity of the crane.
    - Cranes will vary with the length of the boom and the boom radius.
    - Include additional precautions when operating near power lines.
- Inspect the crane daily for damage. The inspection must be done by someone who is very familiar with the crane and knows how to inspect it properly.

Slings

- Visually inspect slings before and during use and remove any damaged or defective slings from service.
- Don't use slings that are:
    - Loaded beyond their rated capacity.
    - Shortened with knots, bolts, or other makeshift devices.
    - Kinked, burned, frayed or deformed.
    - Check the links and hooks on chain slings for deformation.
- When a load is suspended, ensure:
    - Loads are clear of all obstructions.
    - Operators avoid sudden starts and stops. If you see this happening talk to the operator directly or talk to your supervisor.
    - Other employees stay clear of loads before and during lifting and suspension by barricading the area and putting up warning signs.

Final Word

Take time to plan lifts, inspect equipment, and safely secure loads. The care and caution you take can save a life.