

Greetings all. Today's topic is about the vital role of Spotters.

Working Near Powerlines

When working with cranes in the vicinity of powerlines, it is crucial to maintain a safe distance to prevent contact with energized electrical conductors.

Identify and mark powerlines in the work area before commencing crane operations. Consult with power companies if necessary.

Safely working near electricity infrastructure in Victoria is now being made easier, with network information now available on [the Look Up and Live app](#).

To comply with the No Go Zone requirements a Spotter must be used when working inside specified clearances near overhead power lines. A Spotter is required for each crane operating in the vicinity of overhead electrical lines on any work site.

Overhead powerlines on poles



Overhead powerlines on towers



Spotters

Spotters are a crucial part of many lifts, particularly those involving overhead electrical assets.

Whether it's high voltage or not, the consequences of contact are extremely high especially for the dogger as they hold the load or tagline which creates a path for the electricity to reach the ground.

The dogger cannot be the spotter as his/her job is to control and watch the load.

Assign a qualified spotter who is trained in recognising the hazards associated with powerlines and can effectively communicate with the crane operator.

The spotter's primary responsibility is to monitor the crane's proximity to powerlines and provide immediate warnings if the clearance distance is compromised.

The spotter should maintain constant visual contact with the crane and communicate clearly with the operator using established hand signals or two-way radios.

When a spotter is employed, the contractor must ensure they are properly inducted into all site safety procedures including the relevant Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS). The spotter must remain at task for the entire time the crane is operating in accordance with the SWMS.

Focus on one crane at a time

A spotter should focus on one crane at a time to ensure their full attention and concentration on monitoring the crane's proximity to powerlines. Here are the reasons:

1. **Enhanced Vigilance:** By focusing on one crane at a time, the spotter can give their undivided attention to the specific crane's movements, position, and clearance from powerlines. This allows them to detect any potential hazards or deviations more effectively.
2. **Clear Communication:** Concentrating on a single crane enables the spotter to communicate clearly and precisely with the crane operator. They can use standardized hand signals or two-way radios without confusion or ambiguity, reducing the risk of miscommunication.
3. **Rapid Response:** In the event of an emergency or if the crane is approaching the

- ‘No Go Zone’, the spotter needs to react promptly to warn the crane operator. By focusing on one crane, they can quickly assess the situation and relay warnings or instructions without delay, helping prevent accidents or contact with powerlines.
4. **Comprehensive Observation:** Monitoring one crane at a time allows the spotter to thoroughly observe the crane's movement and the surrounding environment. They can identify potential obstructions, changing weather conditions, or other factors that may affect the safe operation of the crane near powerlines.
 5. **Reduced Mental Load:** Concentrating on a single crane reduces cognitive overload for the spotter. They can maintain a higher level of alertness and awareness of the specific crane's behaviour, ensuring better judgment and decision-making.

Remember, the primary goal of having a spotter is to prevent accidents and protect workers from hazards associated with working near powerlines. Focusing on one crane at a time optimizes the spotter's effectiveness and contributes to a safer working environment.

Spotter qualifications

Spotters for overhead electrical lines shall have completed an endorsed spotter training course by a registered training provider and be competent in the design envelopes for the equipment/plant being used.

They must be familiar with the actual lift plan for operation including any traveling or crawling with the load.

The General Requirements given by EnergySafe Victoria for working as a spotter can be found [here](#).

Pick and Carry Cranes

Pick-and-carry cranes are at risk of contact with electrical hazards by luffing up and by travelling with the load (especially backwards). Make sure that the spotter stays to the side of the crane and out of the direct line of travel. They must provide early and effective warning to the crane operator of any potential encroachment on the No Go Zone.

Although it's not a 'hands-on' role, the role of Spotter is every bit as important. Distractions come in many forms including everything from the phone in your pocket to the personnel and machinery operating around you.

A momentary lapse in concentration or failure to follow safe practices when working near powerlines can lead to electrocution hazards and severe accidents. Always prioritise safety and ensure that all personnel involved in crane operations are aware of the potential risks and necessary precautions.

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