

Greetings all, today we will discuss the ‘Commercial Influence’ on Safety.

We are always trying to determine who is to blame when something goes wrong with a Crane. Or at the very least, anyone caught up in an incident wants to prove they aren't to blame. I've talked about root cause analysis and the statistical data around the contributing factors and causal factors, but we can actually go a step further beyond this. When we dig deeper, we usually find it leads to a dollar sign.



The reality is, we live in a world where we don't own money, it owns us. Any project will have to be quoted or tendered (formally or informally). If you're paid a fixed rate to erect a certain structure, you're probably going to be incentivised to do it quickly so you can send the crane to another job and also to minimise your labour cost. Fair enough, right?

This often flies in the face of maximising safety, or in some cases ignoring it completely. Usually those working the actual job know exactly what is required equipment and personnel-wise but are not always provided with those basic essentials to ensure everything goes to plan. Examples of this are:

- Neglecting to use spotters
- Setting up on questionable ground conditions with insufficient outrigger support
- Lifting out of chart instead of repositioning
- Lifting in high winds

Further to this when a crane crew arrives on site, there are often different circumstances to which the equipment was selected for and to which the job was quoted for. The commercial reality is that it's sometimes not possible to bring in a bigger crane or more appropriate lifting gear in the time frame required.

In bigger ongoing jobs like Windfarms, there is a tight schedule to follow and delays caused by the crane company attract big penalties. Moving a large crane from one hardstand to the next while partially rigged, is certainly possible according to the manufacturer's recommendations but there is always a caveat about the ground being dead flat and of appropriate bearing capacity. Maybe the project is behind and keeping the large machine rigged while mobiling will bring it back on track? Regardless, these choices are made over the dollar sign. You don't do that for fun.



Often, we get away with minor breaches due to the fact that there are many safety factors built into our equipment and procedures. Chains have a 4 to 1 safety factor, synthetic round slings 7 to 1, and the crane load chart is 75% of its stability capacity. Where we get into trouble is flaunting these protection mechanisms here and there to save time with no consequence. This builds a false sense of security and a sense of invincibility that goes on until that day when your number's up. Then it's too late and no amount of money saved ever makes it worthwhile. Add to that, the financial and emotional burden of living with the thought of a preventable incident on your conscience for the rest of your life. That is the reality. There is always a choice, and just because nothing bad has happened so far, does not mean you have been making the right choices. Safety is everyone's responsibility, legally and morally, from the bottom of the chain right to the top...

Stay Safe -CICA