

The Dangers of Falling objects.

The Raw Incident Data partnership mentioned in [Bulletin 265](#) between WorkSafe Victoria and CICA continues and we now have data for 2019 + Quarter 1 of 2020. Each quarter we will review new incidents and add to the dataset to identify trends and hopefully improvements in the statistics surrounding construction incidents involving cranes.

In Q1 2020 we had **18** new incidents YTD putting the crane industry on track to improving on the 2019 total of 84.

There was a significant shift in the breakdown of incident types. With 8 new Q1 incidents of falling objects compared to only 20 for the whole of 2019. This represents an increase from 25% to 44% which is why it's the main focus of this bulletin.

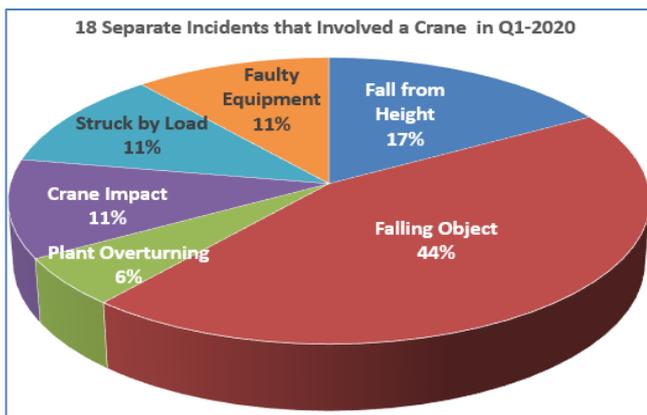


Chart 1: Q1-2020 Incidents

Load strikes have reduced, but cases of personnel falling from heights have increased with 3 new cases. Two were serious injuries and the remainder was classified as a near miss at significant height thanks only to a correctly fitted and functioning inertia reel worn by the rigger. See [Bulletin 210](#).

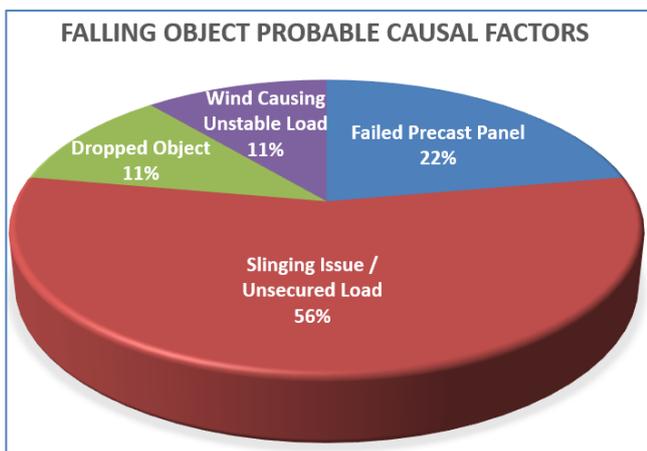


Chart 2: Probable Causal Factors

Fortunately, each incidence of falling object was a near miss with no Injury. However, the story could have been very different as 2 of the cases involved a failed precast concrete element and one of the Faulty Equipment incidents in Chart 1 related to bent 10t lifting clutches detected only during the release once the element was in position. [Bulletin 253](#) covers off all the checks and balances around ensuring your panels are fit for lifting as well as other hazards when lifting precast elements.

All Falling Object cases involved a mobile crane except for one which was a bundle of strapping dropped from a tower crane. The main causal factors for the Falling Objects in Chart 1 are shown in Chart 2. Unsecured loads make up 56% of these probable causal factors. Each of the cases making up the 56% occurred with multiple pieces being lifted i.e. a bundle of wood/pipes or stack of roof sheets.



It might be tempting to blame the rigger and dogman and classify each as a slinging issue, but that is too simplistic and largely inaccurate. In at least 2 of the cases, the load was 'spilled' as it was landed and in one case a stack of roof sheets immediately began sliding off the 5m high landing zone onto the ground.

The main points we need to focus on, involve ensuring:

- We have a suitable landing zone.
- We have someone qualified to land the load.
- The load is properly double wrapped around the bundle AND the stillage (if applicable).
- The lift path is [clear of personnel](#).
- The load is guided in by someone qualified with an extra [spotter](#) if needed.

All of this should be in the [site-specific SWMS](#) and we need to take the time to read it not just tick off the items. Falling objects are mostly near misses but that is no excuse for complacency.

Stay Safe -CICA