

Keeping Your Crew Safe in a Crane Work Platform

When your business involves workers in crane work platforms, their safety is as essential as your equipment. The implications of poor safety and low productivity far overshadow other factors, so it's no longer business as usual when you discover that your crane's basic work platform design encourages unsafe work practices and the potential for worker injury.

What happens after an unfortunate accident involving one of your crew members? Higher insurance, potential lawsuits, loss of reputation, and more could be the results.

To avoid accidents, here are four safety points to consider when selecting a crane work platform.

1 Radio-remote controls

Radio-remote controls in the platform attached to a crane are a must for the operator. Anything less is just that—less safe and less productive.

2 Powered auto-leveling

Hydraulic-powered auto-leveling ensures both the safety of personnel and the stability of payloads. The ability of the electronic level sensor and the 12-volt power unit to control the hydraulic leveling cylinder enables the platform to continue leveling while the crane boom is being raised or lowered. The platform levels regardless of the location of the payload inside the platform and independently of where it is rotationally positioned.

In contrast, the current industry standard for crane-attached platforms is gravity self-leveling, a design from the 1970s that is incapable of performing the

above operations. Gravity leveling is unreliable, and requires the crane operator to constantly be on guard in order to maintain personnel and payload in an exact center of gravity. This process is necessary to keeping the platform from tilting.

Personnel leaning or reaching outside the platform will cause it to tilt out of level unless the platform brake is locked. When the brake is released, the platform often tilts until the personnel and payload are repositioned to a more central location. When reaching over the railings to work on objects at higher heights, operators often find it very unnerving to have the platform suddenly tilt downward. Gravity leveling is risky for those in the platform as well as those on the ground below.

3 Full platform rotation

There is ongoing concern about how close workers could more safely position themselves to the work area. Platforms should be capable of rotating 180° so that they can always be positioned parallel to the work surface or wrap around

By Tim Raymond

Tim Raymond is owner of Reach-All Platforms LLC, based in Bradenton, Fla. He can be contacted at www.reachallplatforms.com.



corners no matter where the vehicle below is located. A worker's true range is only as good as the position of his platform to the work area. Proper positioning of the platform saves time and eliminates having to move the vehicle. Without 180° rotation, the platform cannot be properly positioned, and this causes workers to bunch up at one corner and stretch unsafely to those hard-to-reach areas.

4 Auto-leveling and rotation synergy

When combined into one package, auto hydraulic leveling and 180° hydraulic rotation enable one, two, or three workers to safely position a loaded platform alongside a structure, around a corner, or into tight openings. The gravity-leveled platform does not allow workers to lift a payload from one side of the platform to the other in a safe manner. The practice can also injure personnel or damage the payload if they shift out of level.

The synergy of auto-leveling and rotation, however, allows personnel to remove an object from the work area, place it into the platform, and reposition themselves to a new location or to the ground without being tilted out of level. The easy and flexible positioning of the platform reduces physical fatigue, increases worker safety, and encourages worker self-empowerment to tackle a project quickly and safely. ■

Meeting Industry Standards

When possible, crane owners should update their cranes to meet ANSI 92.2 requirements in order to avoid the stringent regulations imposed by OSHA's 29 CFR 1926 rules.

Information about these standards, costs and details can be found at www.webstore.ansi.org or www.mancomm.com/Departments/Products/Regulations/OSHA/Construction.aspx.

The time is now.



MLC165

There's never been a better time to own the MLC165. With best-in-class lifting capacity, easy assembly and the support of Manitowoc Crane Care, the MLC165 offers the flexibility and performance you need to take your business to the next level.

- 182 USt capacity
- 275 ft main boom
- 5510 ft-kips maximum load moment
- Self-erect mast cylinder eliminates the need to reeve the assembly block
- Max boom + fixed jib combination of 226 ft + 80 ft
- CraneSTAR comes standard



To learn more and for special financing options, contact your local distributor or visit www.manitowoccranes.com

