

Spot The Safety Violation: 14 Rules for Safe Use of Lifting Devices



Should these workers be anywhere near this suspended and likely very heavy load?



In practically every workplace, it's crucial for workers to be aware of their surroundings. For example, workers operating powered mobile equipment such as forklifts must be careful not to run into or over any co-workers. Similarly, workers on foot must be aware of the use of lifting devices such as cranes and hoists in their vicinity and take care to stay out of the way of both the devices and the loads being lifted.

This picture from [elcosh](#) shows a crane lifting a section of a bridge. The workers in the picture are all far too close to this elevated load. They aren't wearing reflective gear to make it easy for the crane's operator to see them. And there doesn't seem to be a flagger or spotter to alert the crane operator to these workers' presence.

14 RULES FOR SAFE USE OF LIFTING DEVICES

For more information on how to comply with the safety requirements for lifting devices such as hoists and cranes, see [MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT: 7 Key Elements of the Lifting Device Requirements](#). Here are 14 basic rules that will help you comply with those requirements:

1. Workers should inspect all lifting devices before using them to ensure that they're in safe working condition.
2. Operators shouldn't leave a lifting device unattended when a load is suspended from it.
3. Ensure that devices aren't used to lift anything that exceeds their load capacity. (See, [overhead crane lift calculation form](#))
4. Ensure that [safe work procedures for work around overhead power lines](#) are followed when there's a risk a lifting device could come into contact with such lines.
5. When the movement of a load could endanger others, use tag lines, guide ropes or clamps to control it.

6. When traveling with a load, the operator should ensure it's carried as close to the ground as possible.
7. If it's reasonably practicable, loads *should not* pass over workers. But you may be permitted to use a lifting device to move a load over workers if there's no other practical alternative under the circumstances and the workers who'll be under the load are effectively warned of the danger, such as through an audible signal.
8. Workers shouldn't ride on a load, hook, rigging or bucket attached to a lifting device.
9. Workers also shouldn't stand or walk under elevated loads unless it's necessary and the device operator knows that they're under the load.
10. Make sure to implement appropriate traffic safety measures, such as signs, barricades or flaggers.
11. Ensure lifting devices have audible warning signals to alert workers to lifting operations.
12. Ensure that the wind or other weather conditions won't impact the lifting of a load or make it hazardous.
13. Protect the operators of lifting devices from hazards, such as falling or flying objects or material and extreme cold or heat.
14. Ensure the load is safely landed and supported *before* it's unhooked from the lifting device.