This fact sheet outlines regulations affecting the use of tower cranes, describes their implications and provides instructions on how to comply.

In April 2010, the ‘Notification of Conventional Tower Cranes Regulations’ came into effect. These regulations focus solely on persons responsible for the installation, operation and dismantling of tower cranes on construction sites.

The regulations require the person who is primarily responsible to notify the HSE of all LOLER Thorough Examinations undertaken on each crane. They do not cover any other type of crane or lifting equipment or work site.

Main features of the regulations

- The notification relates to thorough examinations of tower cranes carried out under the Lifting Operations Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER)
- A notification must be made within 14 days of each thorough examination
- LOLER Thorough Examinations must be carried out:
  (a) Following installation and reconfiguration (i.e. change in height or jib length)
  (b) Periodically in service (generally at 6- or 12-month intervals)
  (c) Following exceptional circumstances
- The notification includes information about the crane's location, who is responsible for it, and who is responsible for its thorough examination, as well as whether any defects posing imminent risk of serious injury are detected
- The HSE must be notified if the ‘before use’ Thorough Examination has not been completed within 14 days of the crane’s installation
- Full details can be found on HSE publication INDG437

Note: Responsibility for notifying the HSE rests with whoever is responsible for ensuring that the crane is thoroughly examined and not with a third party, such as Zurich, contracted to carry out Thorough Examinations.
**Thorough Examinations**

**Initial and periodic**

There are important distinctions between the two types of Thorough Examination prescribed within LOLER. An **initial** Thorough Examination (undertaken before use, when the crane has been installed or reconfigured) is governed by regulation 9(2) of LOLER, while a **periodic** (routine/in-service) thorough examination is governed by regulation 9(3) of LOLER.

**Purpose**

The **purpose** of initial and periodic Thorough Examinations is also different.

An **initial** Thorough Examination is general, to ensure that the crane has been installed correctly and is safe to operate.

A **periodic** Thorough Examination is specific, to detect service-induced deterioration that is liable to result in dangerous situations.

**Scope**

An **initial** Thorough Examination will be different in scope to a **periodic** Thorough Examination as it will include:

(a) The examination of safety-critical parts prior to and during installation that cannot in practice be examined once the installation is complete

(b) Verification of factors such as the adequacy of the ground on which the crane is sited.

**Competency**

The competency of the person carrying out the **initial** Thorough Examination may need to be different from that of the person carrying out the **periodic** one. However both types of examination can be carried out by the same company, team or individual, as long as the differences in necessary competency are recognised.

If the inspection service is to be provided by a contracted independent third party, such as Zurich, then the contract wording must be clear about the type of Thorough Examinations to be undertaken. Generally, **initial** Thorough Examinations are undertaken by the owner or hirer of the crane and the type of inspection services contracted to inspection bodies such as Zurich are **periodic** Thorough Examinations.

**Tower crane thorough examination and notification process**

- Install Crane
- Initial thorough examination
  - LOLER 9(2)
- Crane in service
- Periodic thorough examination
  - LOLER 9(3)
- 6 months
  - (recommended)
- Reconfigure crane
- Notification to be sent to the HSE
Implications

According to the HSE, in the nine years between 2001 and 2009, there were 61 accidents involving tower cranes, in which nine people died and 25 were seriously injured.

The HSE considers the risks of using tower cranes on construction sites to be intolerably high compared to the safety risks of using any other type of work equipment or any other place of work.

A fee is charged when you make a notification.

It is understood that the HSE will keep a record of notifications in the form of a register. The register provides the HSE with a snapshot of all the tower cranes in use on construction sites in the UK at any given time – currently thought to number between 1,000 and 1,500. The fee you are charged covers the administration of the register, making it cost-neutral.

Summary

- The HSE have targeted tower cranes used on construction sites with new regulations enabling them to keep a register of all active tower cranes.
- This register may be used by the HSE to target their site inspection activities in order to address a specific risk associated with tower cranes on construction sites.
- There are two distinct types of Thorough Examination that must be performed in order to comply with the regulations and help ensure that the tower cranes are safe to use – initial and periodic.

For more information

Should you require any further guidance, please contact:

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