



Crane Safety

Crane safety at sites with multiple operating cranes

A recent crane accident in Austin, Texas, on September 16, 2020, reminds us of the dangers present when multiple cranes are operating in close proximity on construction sites. The accident involved a tower crane and crawler crane coming into contact and injuring more than twenty people¹.

Events like this are a stark reminder of the pain that is experienced when things go wrong. Unfortunately, we learn from accidents; therefore, now may be a good time to review your crane policies and procedures, ensuring that they are comprehensive enough to prevent similar incidents.

The following information should be considered:

- Have daily meetings with the crane operators to discuss rigging and hand signals. Ensure that the crane operators know what work is being performed around their rig.
- Review the communication method between the crane operator and the riggers/signal persons and ensure they are adequately trained. Many contractors use a dedicated person to communicate with the crane operator. When communicating visually, the signal person should wear something that makes them easily identifiable to the crane operator and all persons on the site. If communication is accomplished via radio, ensure that there is a designated channel available.
- If multiple cranes are working nearby, ensure spotters are utilized when needed.
- When cranes are operating close to other cranes, buildings, power lines, other objects in their path or overlapping zones, they should be equipped with aftermarket proximity sensors (working space limiters). The proximity devices activate to prevent the load, its attachment, or any part of the crane from experiencing a collision. Many devices include an audible alarm, and the machine stops automatically whenever the limits are approached.
- Be sure to determine your compliance with the regulatory safety standards promulgated by OSHA. Code of Federal Regulation (CFR)[1926.1424\(b\)](#) speaks directly about instituting a system to coordinate multiple crane operations.
- Pre-planning is a critical item, especially when multiple cranes are utilized on a construction site. The anticipated work, proximity to other cranes, and expected operating radiuses should all be evaluated to determine the safe location of cranes.

Please feel free to contact your designated Safety Specialist should you need assistance.

Sources:

1. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/16/us/austin-crane-collapse.html>

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