



SUSPENDED LOADS

Lightning doesn't have to strike twice to cause an injury. Once is usually enough. It's the same way with overhead loads. If one falls on you, it generally makes a permanent impression.

It is common practice for construction workers to be working in, around and/or near suspended loads, however, all too often the individuals are not properly trained or aware of the exposures, which at times can lead to serious injury or death. There is a high risk of serious injury if a suspended load should fall during handling operations.



To prevent injury, the following approaches, at a minimum, should be implemented:

- Make sure all are trained and, as needed, certified in the gear they use!
- Avoid carrying loads over people. This is required to protect people from the hazard of a falling load due to inadvertent failure of a crane, hoist, forklift or other machinery; or operator error.
- A suspended load can be moved using a crane, forklift, hoist or tractor bucket. However, don't forget that forklift masts and forks, harvester heads, hoists or empty buckets are also considered a suspended load. When someone stands under any of these items they are at risk of injury. Be aware as well of what is being moved, its swing, and stability.
- It is best to have a "10' foot rule". This requires that no one is allowed within 10 feet of the area in which the load would fall if a failure occurred.
- Establish specific hand signals for operators and employees and make sure everyone at your operation understands what they mean.
- Make sure that the load rating for slings, chains or straps is adequate for the rating of the crane, boom, forklift or bucket. If you do not know, it is not safe to use! Always limit the load to the lowest rated part of the lifting system. Assure all slings, hoist, crane and machinery components are inspected before use and in adherence with your preventive maintenance and manufacturer's requirements.
- Always place the forklift forks, tractor bucket, or sling on the ground when not in use, even when they are not carrying a load.
- Guard against "shock loading" (activating lifting controls abruptly by placing excessive forces on the lifting components) by taking up the slack in the load slowly. Apply power cautiously to prevent jerking at the beginning of the lift, and accelerate or decelerate slowly.
- Check for proper balance and that all items are clear of the path of travel. Never allow anyone to ride on the load or in the tractor bucket!
- Keep all personnel clear while the load is being raised, moved, or lowered. Operators must watch the load at all times when it is in motion and, as needed, have a signal person.
- NEVER allow more than one person to control a lift or give signals to a crane or hoist operator except to warn of a hazardous situation.
- Never raise the load more than necessary, or leave the load suspended in the air.
- Never allow anyone to work under a suspended load.



ACCIDENTS WITH SUSPENDED LOADS ARE OFTEN SERIOUS AND SOMETIMES FATAL.

DO NOT STAND UNDER ANY SUSPENDED LOAD!

Be Safe!