

HOISTING SIGNALS

Ground Rules

Signalling is an important part of hoisting and rigging. You should be familiar with the internationally recognized system of standard hand signals.

If you're going to rig a load, you also need to know the signals for lifting, moving and landing it. The operation may be a simple *LIFT* and *LOWER*; or it may require more complicated signals.

In many cases, hand signals are the most efficient form of communication between riggers and crane operators.

On construction sites, signalling is required in five situations.

1. When the operator cannot see the load.
2. When the operator cannot see the load landing area.
3. When the operator cannot see the path of travel of either the load or the crane.
4. When the operator is too far from the load to judge distance accurately.
5. When the crane or other hoisting device is working close to live power lines or equipment.

Hand signals have their limitations. For example, they should never be used when distance or visibility prevents accurate communication with the operator.

There is a signal for each action of the crane. By using the correct hand signals you can get a crane to do almost anything you want. The operator only needs to clearly see and understand your signals.

These are the ground rules for signalling.

- Only one person should signal the operator. But anyone can give the *STOP* signal and it must be obeyed immediately. [Demonstrate signal.]
- Signals should be clear and, wherever possible, barehanded.
- The load must be directed so that it never passes over anyone.
- Operators should not make a move until they receive and understand your signal. If contact between you and the operator is broken for any reason, the operation must stop.
- Some situations call for two signallers. For instance, during a concrete pour, one signaller may be needed to direct the lift while the other directs the drop.
- Where a difficult lift demands voice communication, use two-way radios instead of hand signals.

[See Safety Talk # 18, for demonstration of the hand signals for hoisting.]

In New Brunswick, the main provisions on hoisting apparatus and mobile cranes can be found in *General Regulation 91-191* under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, sections 207 – 215.

**You can find more information on WHSCC's programs
and services on the internet at <www.whscc.nb.ca>.**

Issued September 2000

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With special thanks to the
*Construction Safety Association
of Ontario* for granting
permission to reprint.