



Information Item	Being vigilant: risks are part and parcel of industry benefits
Sponsor	CEO
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*The Crane Association of New Zealand's Past President, Scott McLeod, discusses why technological advancements should not be taken for granted in this month's **The Technical Corner**.*

New and innovative technology might afford a myriad of benefits but often come with unforeseen risks, too.

Take crane remote controls as an example – considered to be a modern marvel, they are the ultimate safety device in an industry with considerable risks.

However, like many things, they have hazards associated with them that users should always be wary and respectful of, McLeod Cranes & Hiabs Managing Director, Scott McLeod, says.

"We become familiar with the technology and its ability to control a large piece of machinery more easily. They're so powerful that it becomes normal to walk around using them because you think nothing will happen.

"But we need to remember to respect the technology, and therefore we have to think about the hazards associated with what we're doing – moving around while controlling the crane."

While there are many different crane types with different implementations of remote control, the most popular are for truck loader cranes, less common are the new remotes becoming available for mobile cranes.

In Scott's opinion, its greatest feature is enabling a safer method of operation for the crane operator.

"They can position themselves so that they can see the load, they can see how the stabilisers are coping under the pressure that's being applied and be clear of crush points and other hazards while moving the crane.

"Additionally, you can ensure other parties stand clear and effectively communicate to the other parties, too – meaning that you're enforcing exclusion zones and pointing out hazards.

"You can also place yourself close to the party who is determining where the load is going. You can be right there with that person and able to move the crane the last few centimetres."

But with that comes risk, he adds.

As you're moving with the remote control, an operator's concentration is not on where they're walking but on controlling the load.

So, the ideal scenario when working with standard remote controls is to stand in one position, and when you're moving around, you need to isolate the remote.

"That's not an easy thing to do because it's so tempting to walk around with it. And frequently you see crane operators are walking around with the control live or standing in inappropriate places, such as the deck of the truck, where you have the added risk of heights.

In these scenarios there are two risks – the operator falling or slipping causing injury and any harm caused by the loss of control of the remote.

"There have also been a number of events where people have had a live control but have been doing something else, like strapping down their load or climbing up on to the truck – then they've bumped a lever and caused harm to someone."

So, while remote controls might be a modern marvel, Scott says, it's crucial not to take them for granted.

*Note: Some of the latest remotes include a feature that detects falls. That's a great option to eliminate some risk with the crane. But remember these latest remotes still won't catch you should you fall or slip due to inattention.*

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