



Doing it in a safer fashion

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Scott McLeod isn't afraid of bringing up a topic of discussion if it means others might learn from it and ensure everyone goes home safe.

He's also not afraid of admitting a stuff up too, especially if it encourages the industry to take note.

In a non-injury event, picked up by an Environment Health and Safety Manager, an operator was standing on an upper works cab access platform while training the crane driver.

During a crane packing up, the crane operator received an SLI Error Code and engaged his trainer to help him understand and clear the condition.

However, during this process and after it, the trainer stood on the upper works cab access platform while the crane was slewing.

While he did mostly use four points of contact, he remained in that position to help with the next step of crane pack up while riding plant.

"I never really thought about it because the trainer was holding on four points of contact, teaching. But I thought it is in our interest to bring it to the industry's attention because it was picked up, and it's one of those things where fresh eyes can more easily raise concerns," Scott says.

"If we think about health and safety 101, riding moving plant is one of those things that is flagged as a no, no. And ultimately, the trainer is a good metre and a half off the ground.

"I thought to myself that it's just something we do, and because it's something we've been doing for years, no one's really pulled the behaviour up. There wasn't much thought about what happens if that guy falls or slips.

"Therefore, others may not have thought about it either. So, I thought I'd be the muggins who steps up and says this is not quite right – you don't actually need to stand there – and encourage members to talk and think about this differently."

Scott says there are always other ways of doing things.

However, and unfortunately, little things can go unnoticed due to the regularity with which they are done, as many a crane owner long in the tooth can attest to.

In this particular instance, Scott says the crane operator could have slewed the crane to 90 degrees.

This would have allowed the trainer to stand on the deck, rather than the side of the access platform, and continue the training while being much safer.

He adds that no one needs to be on the side, even if a person has four points of contact.

“And if we had gone about it in that particular fashion, we’d have reduced the risk.

“Thanks to hindsight, we know it wasn’t quite right, we shouldn’t have done that, we should have risk assessed it. Therefore, we will change our ways, and you should, too.

“Because to be honest, I wasn’t the first and it won’t be the last time. There’ll be other things that people look at and ask ‘why are you doing it that way?’.

“That’s great that people can ask those questions. So I think we should all embrace those moments; ultimately, I believe that will make a safer New Zealand and bring those stats down.”

ENDS