



Technical Corner: Lifting the veil on section 24

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In the second part of our new three-part series about regulations, the Crane Association of New Zealand's Past President, Scott McLeod, shines a light on the obscurities critical to going home safe in this month's The Technical Corner.

There are plenty of other things we would prefer to do than get our heads around regulations.

They aren't fun to read or interpret – and the Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016 (the Regulation) is no exception.

Nevertheless, Scott McLeod says understanding the do's and don'ts are crucial to ensuring everyone goes home safe at the end of the day.

There are two sections in particular that crane operators need to be aware of.

Section 24 – Managing risks associated with working under raised objects – states that:

1. A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must manage, in accordance with regulations 5 to 8, risks to health and safety associated with work being done under any object that has been raised or lifted by any means.
2. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk referred to in subclause (1), the PCBU must minimise the risk by, so far as is reasonably practicable, providing supports or other devices to be placed or used under the raised object so that the object cannot fall or be lowered while a worker or other person is under it.
3. PCBU who contravenes this regulation commits an offence and is liable on conviction, —
 - a. for an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000:
 - b. for any other person, to a fine not exceeding \$50,000.

“As you can imagine, as crane companies, this is what we actually do. We raise objects,” Scott says.

“And it's important to understand that in this regulation's section, it says a PCBU – again not the worker – is responsible for managing risks to health and safety associated with work being done under any object that has been raised or lifted by any means – it doesn't separate it.

“Part two of the section gives some examples by placing other devices under the raised object. As we are working with loads moving and at height, we’re unable to do this.

“So, you can see that whoever wrote the regulation was obviously thinking about a jack or a piece of lifting equipment in the workshop where you can probably put something under it, to stop it from falling and crushing the worker around it.”

However, it should be clear that the Regulation’s aim is to enforce a safe working environment.

So, the best thing you can do – in every situation – is to establish and maintain Exclusion Zones. They are incredibly important in any crane operator’s line of work, Scott says.

“Now, there is a little bit of relief in this particular regulation in the Good Practice Guidelines for Precast Concrete – the GPG see section 10.8.

“In those guidelines, the Crane Association – working alongside WorkSafe – understood the problem of section 24 and the way that it was worded.

“So, because they understood that problem, they provide more realistic examples. If you’re confused about what you should do, study those guidelines for help.

“PCBUs must follow a prescribed risk management process to manage these risks. Worst case scenario, and you end up in a tussle with WorkSafe, then it might be in your interest to use the examples in the GPG for Precast Concrete.”

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