

Safety Alert

College of
Electrical
Training

NECA
Western Australia

Electrical
Group
Training

Title:

Close call incident – Crane lifts / Installation of heavy plant

Safety Alert 36

Recently an EGT Apprentice was involved in a close call incident (where the outcome could have been the death or serious injury of the apprentice). It is important all EGT apprentices read this safety alert and discuss any questions with their EGT Field Officer to prevent a similar occurrence.

Details:

The incident occurred during the placement of a 1.2 tonne UPS battery in a roof level battery room on a four storey building - via a crane lift through an access hatch. The battery had been placed in the battery room however was not placed in the final installation point. The decision was made by the supervising tradesperson and the dogman (crane assistant) to use the crane to slightly lift the battery so as to enable the manual handling positioning of the battery into the final installation position.

The dogman rigged the battery with one 2 tonne sling and instructed the crane operator to lift the battery. The supervising tradesperson and the dogman did not instruct the apprentice to stand clear of the lift and in fact had the apprentice and another worker assist them in manually handling the slightly lifted battery into position.

During the manual handling of the slightly lifted battery unit the battery tilted forward onto the apprentice, trapping the apprentice between the 1.2 tonne battery and the wall of the battery room. The battery was at an approximately 45 degree angle and was resting on the apprentice's chest – placing a significant weight on the apprentice - restricting the apprentice's ability to breathe freely.

Despite the efforts of the 3 others in the room to 'right' the tilted battery and hence free the apprentice the apprentice was only freed after another person by chance saw what was going on and then assisted the 'righting' of the battery. The apprentice was trapped against the battery and the wall for a period of approximately two minutes. The apprentice was not seriously hurt, however -

THIS INCIDENT COULD HAVE RESULTED IN SERIOUS INJURY OR EVEN A FATALITY

Key points to remember:

- Never stand near a load in-lift or assist with positioning a load in-lift – the only person that can do this is a High Risk Licensed dogman (crane assistant).
- Always stand clear of a load in-lift and the travel path of a load in-lift – if this requires stopping work so as to be able to stand clear, you must stop work and leave the lift and lift path area.

Any questions or queries are to be directed to your Field Officer or one of our WHS Advisors.