

Safety Tips for Working Under Suspended Loads



It's very common to work with and around suspended loads. Many times, workers are not trained properly or fully aware of their particular exposure. Such lack of communication and knowledge makes great room for carelessness, injury, and even death. It's vital to your business operations that employees remain safe and productive.

WE NEVER WORK UNDERNEATH OR IN THE LINE OF FIRE OF SUSPENDED LOADS!!!!

Implement this list of OSHA suspended load safety tips for a safer place of employment.

1. All employees operating equipment should be properly trained regarding hoist and overhead crane safety rules and procedures. They should also be certified and licensed to operate said equipment.
2. A responsible company employee familiar with the hoist and overhead crane safety tips should test hoisting and crane equipment monthly. Rigging equipment should be tested annually.
3. Do not carry loads over people. Equipment can fail unexpectedly, and operator errors can have serious ramifications.
4. Parts of the equipment itself such as empty buckets, forks, and masts are still considered suspended loads. One does not have to be moving material.
5. Further, it's important to be aware of a suspended load's stability or swing. When material or equipment is moved, the contents might also be susceptible to movement.
6. Put a "10-foot rule" in place. No company employee is allowed to be within a 10-foot radius of the suspended load in case of equipment malfunction and/or an accidental drop. If a load is suspended more than 15 feet high, then increase that radius.
7. You might look into purchasing remote controls for hoists and overhead cranes. Operators may then safely maneuver the equipment from a distance.
8. Check the [load rating for straps](#), slings, and chains. Be certain that they can bear the load of the forklift, crane, or bucket. Remember to always limit the load based

on the lowest rating of the lifting system. If unclear at all, cease all operations until certain!

9. All hoists, cranes, slings, and other machine components should be inspected before use. They must adhere to the company's set preventative maintenance and manufacturer's requirements.
10. All buckets, forks, and slings should rest on the ground when not in use, even if they contain or carry no load.

This is in reference to 1910.179(n)(3)(vi), "The employer shall require that the operator avoid carrying loads over people." As noted in 2007 by an OSHA Standard interpretation (<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2007-11-16>), all load handling fixtures are considered part of the load (even if they carry nothing themselves). Our tip takes form when considered alongside 1910.179(n)(3)(x), "The employer shall ensure that the operator does not leave his position at the controls while the load is suspended," while understanding that a load can mean any attached load-handling fixture, and the load would be considered not in use if there is no operator at the controls.

11. Avoid "shock loading." That is, do not activate the lift controls suddenly by issuing excessive force on the load. Be cautious, applying power easily. Do not jerk the controls; accelerate and decelerate slowly.
12. Don't raise the load more than is necessary.
13. Multiple employees should never be in charge of operating a single piece of equipment. Hand signals should only be given to warn of hazards.
14. At times, surroundings can grow noisy or a voice may simply not be heard over distance. Establish hand signals, and teach these to all company employees.
15. Equipment operators should watch their load the entire time it is in motion, from liftoff to landing.
16. No persons should ever be permitted to ride in a tractor bucket or on the load itself.
17. Always check for load balance, and clear a pathway prior to movement.
18. Take weather conditions into consideration before moving a load.
19. Loads that can potentially shift during movement must be secured in place.
20. Be careful that the load does not shift outside of the equipment's tires or tracks. The equipment may tip over.
21. Check that all alarms and horns are in working order.
22. Maintain a distance of 10 feet from power lines.