



Gantry Crane Fatal Accident

INCIDENT

While installing extra power points in a boiler shop, a contract electrical worker's head was crushed between a frame of a moving 5 tonne Demag overhead gantry crane and a steel portal – a vertical steel beam which holds the roof and crane rail. He died instantly.

CIRCUMSTANCES

Rather than use other means such as a ladder, cherry picker or scissor platform, the worker was feeding in the cable from the service platform of the gantry crane. This cable had been runs to the mains and being backed into ducting along the wall by the crane rails. The crane was being controlled by the workshop employer at ground level. While feeding in the cable from the platform of the moving crane, the worker became trapped between the crane's frame and one of the steel portals.

INVESTIGATION

The investigation found that the hazard between the crane and the steel portal had not been recognised. This is because the platform of the gantry crane is meant to be used as a service platform, not a platform that is normally worked on.

The crane control's stop button had an over-travel of 200mm. Taking this into consideration, had the victim warned the employer to stop the crane, the employer's reaction time, as well as the crane's over-travel when the stop button was pushed, meant the crane would have moved significantly further than intended.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR ADVICE

It is the Department's advice that:

- Cranes should only be used for the specifically designed purpose of lifting objects.
- If work is to be completed around gantry cranes, the use of the crane itself should be avoided and the work completed by other means. If this is not possible, the operator of the crane should be in immediate and visible view of any other party engaged in work involving the crane.



- If personnel are required to work on cranes for inspection and maintenance, or around cranes for other reasons, a system should be in operation to ensure that the personnel are not endangered by crane movements, and that a safe working environment is provided.

For further information on crane safety, including inspection checklists, view the Approved Code of Practice for Cranes at www.osh.govt.nz.

Note: This material has been prepared using the best information available to the Department of Labour at the time of publication. Information may change over time and it may be necessary for you to obtain an update. This material is also only intended to provide general advice and does not constitute legal advice. You should make your own judgement about action you may need to take to ensure you have complied with your workplace health and safety obligations under the law.

**WHICH INDUSTRIES/SECTORS OR MATTERS
WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT TO?**

Construction industry