



DANGERS IN THE USE OF CB RADIOS ON CRANES

Caution should be exercised when considering whether to use Citizens' Band (CB) radios on construction sites to communicate between crane drivers and dogmen. Hand and whistle signals are the preferred methods of communication on worksites, although CB radios may be appropriate where cranes are delivering loads into chasms and the dogman can not be seen by the crane driver.

While CB radios are convenient and inexpensive, any of the 40 preset selectable channels may be used by other people at any time, leading to interference and/or interruption in communications. Another danger is that transmitters with high-power amplifiers could interfere with communication. Such interruption of communication between the crane driver and the dogman could cause a serious accident.

If CB radios are used at a construction site, it is safer to use a dedicated channel that will be allocated for your use only by the Spectrum Management Agency (SMA). This will minimise the possibility of interference during vital communications.

The SMA is a statutory agency of the Commonwealth Government and provides a licence for a dedicated channel for a charge of less than \$500. However, this licence is allocated for only one particular site and a new licence is required when the crane is moved to another site.

Transceivers (a combined transmitter and receiver) may be either small hand-held devices or may be designed for installation in the crane. Transmitted power is usually a maximum of five watts, which is more than adequate for crane communications.

A downward-beaming type of aerial is recommended for use on cranes to minimise radiation in unwanted directions.

Recommendations

Because safety is compromised when unlicensed CB radio systems are interrupted during crucial communications, only licensed CB systems with a dedicated channel should be used on construction sites.

Hand and whistle signals should remain the main method of communication between crane drivers and dogmen.

Further information is also available from WorkCover by calling 13 10 50.