

Safeguard

Construction and Demolition

Risk of falls – transporting of precast panels/elements



Government
of South Australia
SafeWork SA

Objective

To provide guidance on eliminating the risk of falls from height during the transporting (loading, unloading, rigging) of precast panels/elements.

Background

The transport of precast panels/elements exposes workers to the risk of falls from height during the loading and unloading process, in particular:

- riggers/dogmen, as they rig and release panels/elements
- transport workers/drivers, as they secure and release panels/elements
- those involved in preparing panels/elements for hoisting e.g. cleaning ferrules and lifting points.

The transport of precast panels/elements requires a safe and efficient means of accessing the panels/elements to secure and release the load before and after it is moved. As this is considered a high risk construction work activity, a detailed, task-specific Safe Work Method Statement must be developed.

To minimise the risk of injury to workers, the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* (SA) stipulates that any Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) has a shared responsibility with principal contractors to provide, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- a safe working environment
- safe systems of work
- plant and substances in a safe condition.

PCBUs involved in the transporting of precast panels/elements may also have additional, more specific duties if they:

- are a principal contractor
- have management or control of a workplace
- have management or control of fixtures, fittings or plant at workplaces
- are involved in the design of plant, substances or structures

- are involved in the manufacture of plant, substances or structures
- import plant, substances or structures
- supply plant, substances or structures
- install, construct or commission plant or structures.

PCBUs involved in the design, manufacture, rigging, loading or transport of precast panels/elements also have a legislated responsibility to, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, co-operate and co-ordinate with other duty holders.

Risk control measures

Eliminating the risk of falls from height must be considered when transporting precast panels/elements. Workers must be provided with protection against potential injury.

Controls to prevent falls from height include, but are not limited to:

- working from the ground
- working from a solid construction (platform)
- use of temporary work platforms (elevated work platform, scaffold)
- use of ladders that have engineered fall protection e.g. hoop ladders, platform ladders (NOTE: Working from ladders is considered a high risk activity and should only be used if there is no other reasonably practicable alternative).

Engineered controls such as handrails provide the best protection against falls from height.

Ground conditions must be assessed as suitable prior to loading and unloading.

Support frames

Support frames used for the transport of precast panels/elements must:

- be capable of supporting all loading conditions, including shock and vibrations arising from the transport

- be designed and engineered by a competent person
- have engineered controls (e.g. handrails, solid platform, fixed ladder) to enable safe access onto and egress from the vehicle while loading and unloading
- be regularly inspected.

Engineering details, specifications and inspection reports must be available upon request.

Rigging licences

Workers involved in the rigging of precast panels/elements during the loading and unloading process must hold a relevant Licence to Perform High Risk Work (one or more of the following):

- Crane Operation (various licence classes, depending upon crane type and capacity)
- Dogging (DG), noting that this does not allow for installation of precast panels/elements
- Rigging (RB, RI, RA).

Further information

SafeWork SA

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)*
- *Code of Practice – Managing the Risk of Falls in the Workplace*

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- *Code of Practice – Construction Work*
- *National Code of Practice for Precast, Tilt-up and Concrete Elements in Building Construction*

Australian Standard AS 2550.1: *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use – General requirements*

Load Restraint Guide (second edition 2004) – National Transport Commission www.ntc.gov.au



Above: Where reasonably practicable, engineered fall protection and access should be provided.

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