

LTI: Finger crushed while moving mobile gantry crane

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A crew member suffered a crushed index finger during manual handling of heavy equipment.

What happened?

The bosun, the deck supervisor and two others were working on disassembling the mobile gantry crane to move it to another location. They successfully took the gantry to pieces and manually moved one of the support legs. They decided to use a pallet trolley to shift the second support leg. They found that they could not get the second support leg (on the pallet trolley) past the first support leg which was blocking the way.

So, the deck team attempted to manually reposition the first support leg.

The injured person (the bosun) started dragging the first support leg, without waiting for help, by grabbing its base from below. As he did so, a vertically positioned wheel turned, causing the support leg to collapse onto his finger and crush it against the deck.

First aid was provided and the bosun had to be medevaced for further treatment ashore.

IOGP Life Saving Rules:



Bypassing safety controls



Line of fire



Fig. 1: Mobile gantry crane
(image: www.hoistuk.com/products/portable-mobile-gantry/)



Fig. 2: Grabbing the base of the support leg (simulation)



Fig. 3: The wheel on the right turned, causing the leg to collapse

What went wrong?

- There was inadequate planning, lack of communication, lack of supervision, and lack of experience in handling manual loads.
- Company procedures were not followed: the Risk Assessment was inadequate. No account was taken of:
 - The weight of the gantry.
 - How many people would be needed to move it safely.
 - The technique to be used and the route through which the loads would be moved.
- **No-one stopped the job** – *“What are we doing here? Let’s just stop a moment and re-assess the situation...”*
- There was insufficient safety awareness of the considerable “line of fire” risks faced – no attention was paid to the pinch point risk.

Actions taken

- The company discontinued the use of this very heavy steel mobile gantry crane with no safety locks on the wheels, and replaced it with a new, much lighter Aluminium mobile gantry crane with wheel safety locks.
- Easier access between port and starboard deck areas was created by modifying (extending) the height of cable tray pipes to avoid the necessity of assembling/disassembling of the gantry crane before movement.
- Re-emphasised crew training on Permit to Work and Risk Assessment –

with particular emphasis on identifying the Hazards related to Pinch Points.

- Conducted further training with on-board leadership on the importance of applying safety tools such as toolbox talks, “step back and take 5”, stop work policy, etc.

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