

Fatalities caused by crane collapse following metal fatigue

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The UK Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has published information on a crane hire company that was fined following an incident that led to the death of two men as a crane collapsed.

What happened?

A worker died after falling from the crane as it collapsed. The crane fell onto a member of the public, killing him also. Sections of the tower crane separated when 24 bolts failed due to metal fatigue. The 24 bolts were a significant safety feature on the crane's slew ring, which connected the mast (tower) to the slew turret. This allows the arms of the crane (jib) to rotate through 360 degrees. When the bolts failed the slew turret and jib separated from the mast and fell to the ground.

A similar earlier incident, when the bolts failed on the same crane and had to be replaced, had not been investigated by the crane company. The company was found to have an inadequate system to manage the inspection and maintenance of their cranes.

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