

## 1.15 CRANE SCALES

Crane scales are to be regarded as lifting equipment and legislation treats them as such. The Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) came into force on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1998 and cover all crane scales and Loadlinks. They implement the Lifting provisions of the Amending Directive to the Use of Work Equipment Directive (AUWED, 95/63/EC). The Regulations apply in all premises and work situations subject to the HSW Act and build on the requirements of the Provisions and Use of Work Equipment Regulations.

LOLER requires that all crane scales are:

### **Strong and stable enough for the particular use and marked to indicate safe working load**

The regulation requires that (a) machinery and (b) accessories are clearly marked to indicate their safe working loads (SWL). Most 'traditional' lifting equipment, i.e. machinery and 'conventional' accessories, should be marked with the SWL, as should other equipment which presents similar risks.

### **Positioned and installed to minimise any risks**

The crane scale should sufficiently strong, stable and suitable for the proposed use. Similarly, the load and anything attached (e.g. timber pallets, lifting points) must be suitable and positioned or installed to prevent the risk of injury, e.g. from the equipment or the load falling or striking people.

### **Used safely i.e. the work is planned and organised by competent people**

The person appointed to plan the lift (referred to as the 'competent person') will normally be an in-house employee. They should have adequate practical and theoretical knowledge and experience to plan the lifting operation properly. The plan should address issues such as "the lift" remaining safe for the whole of the operation, i.e. from where the load starts to where it finishes.

### **Subject to ongoing thorough examination and, where appropriate, inspection by competent people**

The crane scale should be checked:

- 1) When lifting equipment is first 'supplied', (i.e. used for the first time by that employer);
- 2) Periodically during the lifetime of equipment
- 3) Following exceptional circumstances

It is usual practice for the competent person carrying out a thorough examination to be employed by a separate company, e.g. a third party examining company. However, the regulation does not prohibit an employer from selecting a member of its own staff to carry out thorough examinations provided that he/she is competent.

In capacities of up to 50T, crane scales must have an ultimate strength of 5:1 and when first supplied, must be proof tested before calibration. Generally, proof testing involves loading the crane scale three times with a load of 2 x SWL.

Once the crane scale is proof tested, calibration is performed in the usual way, tested at equal points through the range and adjusted, as required.

### **References**

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998, SI 1998 No. 2307.  
Simple Guide to LOLER – download from the HSE website.  
Safe use of lifting equipment. Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations. 1998. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L113.  
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