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Lifting and Rigging General Safety

Lifting and rigging work tasks are considered high-hazard tasks by many companies. There are a lot of associated hazards that accompany lifting any loads with cranes or equipment. It is important to not only understand proper rigging techniques, but also the other hazards that accompany this type of work task.

Lifting and Rigging Incidents:

The first type of incident that often comes to mind regarding lifting and rigging is the breakage of a sling, wire rope, or chain resulting in a dropped load. While these types of incidents usually have the most severe consequences, there are often many other types of less severe incidents that cause the majority of injuries or property damage.

Some of the other injuries and incidents that can occur are sprains, falls, crush injuries, electrocutions, and struck-by incidents, just to name a few. Hazards such as swinging loads, manual handling of heavy rigging, holding on to tag lines, moving equipment, pinch points, working on elevated surfaces, trip hazards, slippery surfaces, etc., can all be present during lifting operations.

Lifting and Rigging Safe Work Practices:

- Anyone in the work area where a lift is being performed should be properly trained on the work scope, hazards, and mitigations of the task.
- Have a written lift plan. A lift plan ensures the desired rigging, angles of equipment, lifting capacities, etc., are thought about prior to the start of the lift.
- Plan the travel area and potential lines of fire prior to the lift. This helps to avoid striking other objects or having to move objects or equipment after the load is already in the air.
- Inspect all rigging prior to using it for a lift. Continuously check the integrity of the equipment throughout the day if there are multiple lifts.
- All rigging should be properly stored after lifting operations are complete. Proper storage helps prevent the rigging from being damaged.
- Keep away from the load. Always strive to use tag lines or push sticks to ensure space from the load.

Summary:

This is not an exhaustive list of all the hazards and safe work practices when completing lifting and rigging activities.

Proper planning is important to eliminate hazards and avoid incidents.

Be aware of the hazards that affect you and your coworkers on each unique lift that is completed.