

Safety Alert - Swing-Up Stabilisers

October 2021

What Happened?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has contacted ALLMI regarding a fatal accident where an Operator was crushed by a 'swing-up' (also known as 'tilting' or 'rotating') stabiliser. Following an investigation, it was found that:

- The Operator was using the hold-to-run levers at the crane base and was not observing the stabiliser as it was being retracted.
- The stabiliser leg was in a horizontal position when it struck the Operator.

The HSE has also informed ALLMI of a further, more recent fatality, which is still being investigated and which may have similarities with the above accident.

Swing-up Stabilisers - Background:

Swing-up stabilisers are fitted to lorry loaders predominantly to negate the need for widescale relocation of chassis furniture during installation, and have become increasingly common in the last 15 years. They may be either manually or hydraulically operated. Operation is either by levers at the crane base or via remote control, dependent upon specification.

Immediate Lessons Learned:

- Swing-up stabilisers should be pinned / locked in the vertical / upright position before the stabiliser beam is deployed or retracted.
- It is essential that Operators fully observe the operation of the stabiliser leg during deployment and stowage.
- Operators must be made aware that the operation of the swing-up function must be separate from the movement of the stabiliser beam (i.e. they should not use both functions simultaneously).
- The risk of crushing is increased on the side where the swing up stabiliser tilts towards the Operator / levers at the crane base.
- Operators must be fully conversant with the manufacturer's instructions regarding the deployment and stowage of swing-up stabilisers. There can be considerable variation between different manufacturer systems.
- Operators must not be positioned in (or lean / reach into) danger zones where there is a risk of crushing.
- If swing-up stabilisers are used on sites where the stabiliser is only partially deployed, there is an increased risk of creating a danger zone where the swing-up stabiliser tilts towards the Operator / levers at the crane base. In this case, consideration should be given to repositioning the vehicle to ensure further extension of the stabiliser beam is achievable prior to the swing-up leg being deployed / stowed.
- Residual risk warning stickers / decals must be visible and maintained.

Immediate Actions Required:

The following is applicable to all lorry loader manufacturers / installers / service repair companies / fleet owners / Appointed Persons / sites receiving lorry loaders:

- This Safety Alert should be briefed to all involved in lorry loader operations.
- Fleet owners should ensure that Operators are competent and have been monitored in the correct use of stabiliser legs.
- Those involved in lorry loader operations should risk assess the crushing hazard from stabiliser deployment and stowage and include control measures in all lorry loader procedural documentation, such as lift plans.
- ALLMI training providers are required to include coverage of this Safety Alert during the ALLMI Operator course, regardless of stabiliser type (as Operators may move between vehicles), whilst training material is updated.
- Those conducting familiarisation training on lorry loaders (such as during new vehicle handover or when Operators move to a new vehicle) should include coverage of this Safety Alert whilst familiarisation documentation is updated.

The Next Steps:

This Safety Alert was produced quickly to inform the lorry loader industry as soon as possible. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide on the topic and updates will be provided as soon as practicable. ALLMI will:

- Ensure all applicable ALLMI training and guidance material incorporates the additional hazards identified with swing-up stabilisers.
- Facilitate ALLMI Technical Standards Committee discussion regarding swing-up stabiliser safety in relation to operation, thorough examination, installation and the design Standard, EN 12999.
- Provide further guidance to ALLMI members once the issues raised by this Safety Alert have been further researched.

Staged Photographs

Operator stowing swing-up stabiliser using levers at the crane base



Location of levers at the crane base



Swing-up stabiliser rotating away from Operator on opposite side of vehicle (manufacturer dependent)

