



## CICA – Vic / Tas Branch Crane Safety Bulletin # 298 March 2022



**Greetings all. Today's topic is about ensuring a timely and appropriate response if or when an incident occurs on site.**

Broadly speaking, an incident is an event that could lead to loss of, or disruption to, your organisations operations.

All incidents need to be evaluated and some incidents will be drastic, life changing and subject to close scrutiny. It is important that your workplace has a plan and process in place and that everyone is aware of its existence.

[CICA Safety Bulletin 245](#) looked at incident causality using the Loughborough model, citing the 2015 RMIT paper, "[Causes of Fatal Accidents Involving Cranes in the Australian Construction Industry](#)". This paper analysed data from a 10-year period 2004-2013 where 359 workers sadly died in the Australian construction industry because of work related causes. Of 258 'closed cases', 22 involved a crane.

The 22 accident cases are individually summarised, and the findings show that the most frequent crane-related accident types were those that were **struck by load**, and **electrocution**.

### Knowing the difference

**Notifiable incident** (Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004) means incidents at a workplace which result in the consequences described below (notifiable incidents) must be reported to WorkSafe. Notification is required where an incident at a workplace results in:

- death; or
- serious injury.

The notification duty also applies to incidents that expose a person in the immediate vicinity to an immediate health or safety risk through incidents including:

- the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, plant that is required to be licensed or registered;
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation;
- the collapse or partial collapse of a building or structure;
- an implosion, explosion or fire;
- the escape, spillage or leakage of any substance including dangerous goods (within

- the meaning of the Dangerous Goods Act 1985); or;
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or object; or
- the following events in a mine:
  - (i) the overturning or collapse of any plant; or
  - (ii) the inrush of water, mud or gas; or
  - (iii) the interruption of the main system of ventilation.
- any other event or circumstance prescribed by the regulations.

In addition, a notifiable incident at a quarry should also be notified to WorkSafe.

The WHS Act 2011 Section 37 defines *Dangerous Incidents* that are notifiable incidents. The incident types listed under the WHS Act 2011 *Dangerous Incident* definition are similar to the incidents that expose a person in the immediate vicinity to an immediate health or safety risk through incidents listed in the OHS ACT 2004, with an additional category of incident type which is electric shock.

A **near miss** is an occurrence/event that may have resulted in an injury or illness.

### Preparing workers for a possible critical incident

No-one wants to entertain the idea of an incident occurring, however, [research](#) demonstrates that positive relationships and compassion, better prepare employees for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situations.

Resilience and preparedness are impacted by:

- Organisational culture
- Developing positive working relationships (employee/supervisor, between employees).
- Clear communication.
- Establishing contacts with suitably trained internal or external debriefers.
- Providing training for workers in the provision of Medical First Aid and Psychological First Aid
- Making assessing the work environment for the potential for critical incidents, a part of everyone's role.
- Working together as a team to develop procedures for responding to identified critical incidents.



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- Making sure that as many people as possible are familiar with these procedures.

**What do you do if/when an incident occurs?**

Do you know what to do what an incident occurs?

Each workplace must establish local systems for responding to workplace incidents. Each employee should be aware of the immediate steps that need to be taken if something happens.

The [CICA Guidance Note – Incident Action Plan](#) (available to CICA members under 'Member Documents') outlines a course of action.

- Follow your company Health and Safety Management system
- Evacuate from the site if necessary.
- Assess the immediate dangers, check for injuries or trapped persons.
- Contact emergency services.
- Contact company designated contact person.
- Assess the crane and the affected structures to decide whether it is safe for emergency service personnel to access the site.
- Shut down operation and evacuate the incident area.
- Freeze the scene to prevent entry by public and any non-essential persons and protect evidence relevant to the incident.
- Obtain photos of incident site if possible.
- Do not distribute photos to anyone outside the company.
- As soon as is practicable, obtain legal briefing from lawyers before providing statements to investigators. [CICAASSIST](#) is a resource for CICA members

**Information sharing**

Reporting hazards, incidents and near misses means that the prevalent immediate circumstances prior to each can be investigated and prevented in future.

Identifying equipment flaws, behavioural, space or environmental contributors is a very important part of the feedback loop.

**Post incidence response**

A coordinated and effective response to any incident needs to provide immediate and appropriate support to the workplace.

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*Look Out for each other -CICA*