



Ironworkers...*On the Safe Side*

Safety and Health Bulletin Dedicated to Servicing Our District Councils, Local Unions and IMPACT Contractors Throughout North America

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Fall Protection and “Greater Hazard” Considerations During Off-Loading Trucks

The Safety and Health Department has been contacted by Local Unions and contractors throughout the country on several occasions regarding project safety requirements mandating the use of 100% fall protection during off-loading iron from flat bed trucks. The International Association appreciates project owners who are commitment to preventing fall hazards on their projects. We recognize that project safety policies may require Ironworkers to tie-off at heights above six feet for all activities, including off-loading iron from flat bed trucks. If this is the requirement on a current or future job site, it is important to recognize “greater hazard” situations that may arise when integrating the use of fall arrest systems while off-loading trucks with hoisting equipment.

Recognizing and Avoiding Greater Hazard Situations.

Issue #1 – Hazards Tying-Off to Flat Bed Trucks

In some instances, project safety personnel have instructed Ironworkers to tie-off to flat bed trucks using stanchion-posts or other fall arrest systems. The typical height of flat bed trucks is 5 feet, and there are numerous reasons why fall arrest systems are either not effective or could create a greater hazard during the off-loading process. Flat bed trucks are not designed as a stable structure for attaching stanchion-posts for fall arrest systems. Following are a few situations that may create a greater hazard.

Greater Hazard Concerns

- When the load is hoisted from truck beds, boom deflection can cause loads to suddenly shift, trapping Ironworkers between structural members or the trucks back-stop.
- Shifting loads can actually pull Ironworkers into the path of a collapsing load.
- Tying –off to vertical posts or horizontal lifeline attachments to the truck could create greater hazard situation.
- Ironworkers (who are qualified riggers) need mobility to react to sudden load movement, and the discretion to use the best hoisting and rigging methods to safely off-load trucks.
- If the crane hoist line is not centered directly over the load, this too can cause the load to shift and trap Ironworkers on several locations on the truck bed.

Ironworkers engaged in off-load structural members from truck beds must be in direct communication with the crane operator at all times to ensure proper hoisting and avoid common hazards. Project safety policies can often mandate the use of 100% fall protection, but may over-look situations involving greater hazard. If you encounter this on your jobsite, remember...“**See Something – Say Something.**”

Issue #2 - Hazards Tying-Off to the Crane Hoist Line.

In other instances, project safety personnel have instructed Ironworkers to tie-off to the crane hoist line using retractable lanyards or other vertical lifeline systems. The crane operator must direct his/her full attention to the hoisting operation of off-loading the structural members. This process should not include Ironworkers tied-off to the crane hoist line that can lead to conflicting activities and serious incidents.

Greater Hazard Concerns

- The integration of retractable lanyards or other vertical lifeline systems to the crane hoist line can cause Ironworkers to be suddenly pulled-off the truck without any opportunity to react to shifting loads.
- Shifting loads can actually pull Ironworkers into the path of a collapsing load.
- The crane hoist line is solely dedicated to hoisting material and must not be used as an anchorage point for fall protection for fall arrest systems. Ironworkers can be trapped and unable to avoid shifting loads.

Alternative Pre-Planning Methods for Consideration

- 1) **Use of off-loading truck pits** - Some projects have preplanned to address potential fall hazards while off-loading trucks with iron and other materials. Long term projects that have sufficient workplace have designed truck-pits that allow workers to access truck beds at ground level.
- 2) **Use of mobile docking platforms** - Some projects have incorporated docking platforms to be positioned around truck beds to allow for easy access and prevent fall hazards.

The Importance for Hazard Recognition and Duty to “See Something - Say Something”

Recognizing and avoiding material handling hazards remains the focus of the 2013 **“Zero Fatality”** campaign, This campaign challenges all members to **“intervene and prevent unsafe conditions and unsafe acts”** in the workplace.

The International Association recognizes the importance of preventing falls during steel erection activities and supports the safety policies and procedures of project owners. If situations on your jobsite present “greater hazards” during off-loading trucks with structural members, remember...**“See Something - Say Something,”** and notify your employer.

If you have any questions regarding fall protection requirements or concerns pertaining to potential “greater hazard” situations, please contact the Safety and Health Department at (202) 383-4800.