

Case 385. 61-year-old crane operator trainee died when he was struck by a 9,400-pound bundle of steel round stock.

A 61-year-old male crane operator trainee died when he was struck by a 9,400-pound bundle of steel round stock. The decedent was utilizing a 20 ton Shawbox overhead crane with a wireless remote pendant. He used two slings for the 20-foot long, 18-24-inch diameter bundle. The round stock bundle was on a “sled” on a powered conveyor approximately 2 feet above the floor. While standing approximately 2 feet east from the load and between the conveyor and a guardrail, he initiated the lift. The decedent apparently, unknowingly, activated the east bridge directional button causing the bridge to move. The lift was now on an angle (in a drag position). Witnesses noted that the hook was not centered over the load and tried to warn him. After he realized he was activating the wrong button and before he repositioned the crane bridge above the load, he activated the upward lift button. As the load lifted, it started to swing and struck his head and upper torso. The force of the strike knocked him into a guardrail and then into previously placed steel stock.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health division issued the following Serious citations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation:

SERIOUS: OVERHEAD GANTRY AND GANTRY CRANES, PART GI 18

- RULE 408.11854(1): An employer shall provide an employee with a permit to operate a crane only after the employee meets the requirements prescribed in R 408.11852, and R408.11853 et seq.

(Employee assigned to operate the overhead crane was not provided training, testing, or a permit.)

- RULE 408.11865(6): (6) When attaching or moving a load, the operator, rigger, or hooker shall make sure of all of the following:
 - (a) The hoisting rope or chain is free of kinks or twists and not wrapped around the load.
 - (b) The load is attached to the load block hook by means of a sling or other approved device.
 - (c) The sling and load will clear all obstacles or obstructions.
 - (d) The load is balanced and secured before lifting the load more than a few inches.
 - (e) Multiple lines are not twisted around each other.
 - (f) The hook is brought is brought over the load in a manner to prevent swinging.
 - (g) There is no sudden acceleration or deceleration of the moving load.

(The hook was not brought over the 9,400-pound load of bar stock in a manner to prevent the load from swinging when lifted. The load was not balanced or secure to the hook on the 20-ton Shawbox Overhead crane before lifting.)