

Spotters – critical for site safety

A “spotter,” is a person who provides the guidance, so people don’t get hurt and things don’t get damaged. However, the role rarely gets the respect or attention it deserves.

Not preparing or training an individual for his or her role as a spotter is a good way to set that person up for failure.

Three of the four leading causes of fatalities on construction sites are directly related to situations that spotters address:

- * people or things being struck,
- * electrocution; and
- * being caught-in-between hazards.

Despite this, few contractors have established best practices for spotters on their sites.

A person designated as a SPOTTER should be easily identifiable e.g., such as wearing uniquely coloured vest or a vest with spotter printed on the back.



Anytime a driver or an equipment operator doesn’t have a clear view of the site, is operating around energized power lines or equipment, or is working on varied terrain, a properly trained spotter should be on hand to help – and being a spotter should be his or her only task, and they should stay on task.

Construction sites are full of distractions, and it’s all too easy for a spotter to their eyes off the job. A spotter cannot protect people and property while looking at prints, sending a text, talking on the phone or daydreaming. His or her attention must be fully devoted to the task.

The spotter must be highly visible, and everyone on the job site should be aware of his or her role. On some sites, the spotter wears a high-visibility safety vest that’s a different colour than the vests worn by other workers. The word “Spotter” may appear on the vest.

RECOMMENDATION:

Establish best practices for the Spotter role.

Prepare or train individuals for their role as a spotter.

Ensure that Spotters stay on task and are not undertaking other duties while spotting.

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