

# Dangers of working under a suspended load

WorkSafe Victoria recently issued a safety alert about the dangers of working under a suspended load following the death of an employee.

The operator of an overhead bridge crane was fatally injured when the jig hook detached from the spreader bar, and he was crushed by steel beams weighing several tonnes. The operator was walking beneath the jig to check the suspended product.

Some overhead cranes and lifting jigs are prone to wear and require regular inspections and maintenance. If the equipment is not maintained it can fail, causing suspended loads to fall.

When a suspended load needs to be constantly moved, the operator may need to detach and reattach the load numerous times along the travel line. The operator needs to ensure the hook is fully inserted into the spreader bar before moving the load.

If a suspended load needs to be inspected, ensure employees lower the load and lifting gear to the ground, or support it using engineered stands. Suspended loads should not be inspected from directly underneath or within the fall shadow.

## The alert also said to:

- review or modify the hook arrangements of lifting jigs and spreader bars to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of the jig not connecting fully with the lifting equipment.
- provide training and instruction to employees on where to stand while moving and securing suspended loads.
- regularly inspect and maintain overhead gantry cranes and their attachments as per the manufacturer's instructions, or the instructions of a competent person.

