INCIDENT ALERT

A crane operator was working with a crew to move a large tool box to a location more convenient for the work being performed. The crane had been set in position for several days performing work, but the operator had not had occasion to swing the boom of the 60 ton capacity crane in the direction the tool box was staged. As the operator rotated the boom, one of the crane’s outriggers began to sink into the earth. The operator immediately ceased operations, retracted the boom, and exited the crane to report the incident.

LESSONS LEARNED

During the investigation the soil beneath the crane outrigger was excavated. No unusual sub soil conditions were identified during the excavation. The surface of the ground appeared to be stable at the time the crane was set. Further investigation indicated that exploratory excavations had taken place in the area and it appeared the outrigger had been set directly over one of the excavated “potholes”. The solution developed was for the crane outriggers to be set on large metal plates to prevent a similar incident.

Cranes are a common site on our projects. Nothing is more critical for the safe operation of a crane than its foundation. When the use of a crane is anticipated on a project site several planning aspects should be considered. What will the crane be lifting? Where will it be lifting to? Where will the crane be staged? What is the condition of the ground? Has there been recent excavation work in the area? Are there underground utilities in the area? Asking and answering these questions may help to eliminate incidents like this in the future.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Talk with your contractor about how crane use is planned for and reviewed on your project. Ask them how crane use plans are integrated into their site specific safety plan. Ask how they assure cranes will not be set on unstable ground.

2. Look at the cranes being used on your site during your safety walk through. Is the operator using pads, plates, or dunnage under the crane outriggers? Has the operator been made aware of the condition of the soil in the area they are working?

3. Share this Incident Alert with your contractor and ask them to share it with their workers.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff