

Lifts and lifting equipment

How Zurich can help businesses meet their duty of care

The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998 apply to all businesses in the UK that have lifting plant and undertake lifting operations.



What does the legislation require?

In conjunction with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998, LOLER requires the duty holder, usually the employer or owner of the equipment, to safeguard people working with and operating lifting equipment, and to control the way in which they use and maintain lifting equipment.

Lifting equipment is defined by LOLER as equipment used at work for the lifting and lowering of loads and persons and includes attachments used for anchoring, fixing and supporting the load. This covers a wide variety of items including cranes, forklift trucks, passenger lifts and lifting accessories such as ropes, slings and eyebolts.

LOLER requires businesses to undertake periodic inspections of their lifting equipment by an independent competent person such as Zurich Engineering, a UKAS* accredited inspection body.

Figures collected over a six-month period showed that of 3618 mobile cranes examined 9% had defects that could lead to serious injuries; of 180,320 fork lift trucks examined 4.4% had defects that could lead to serious injuries (source: The Safety Assessment Federation).

How can we help your business to comply with LOLER?

Zurich provides routine in-service examinations of lifting equipment to comply with the requirements of LOLER.

Our engineer surveyors carry out thorough visual examinations, focusing on safety critical components and primarily aimed at controlling risks associated with:

- the failure of mechanical components or electrical devices that could lead to the loss of control of any load or persons being lifted, lowered, arrested or suspended
- the failure of mechanical components or electrical devices that could lead to persons falling from height – for example, from a crane
- the failure of mechanical components or electrical devices that are designed to protect persons, for example, safety or protective devices.

As well as reporting defects, routine in-service inspections are aimed at assessing an item's fitness for continued use – that is ensuring that health and safety conditions are maintained and that any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time.

In-service inspections are not aimed at assessing the item's suitability for intended use (that is, whether the item is suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used) and does not take account of, or include an assessment of, your business's risk assessments or control measures.

Real life examples

The main risk while using lifting equipment is mechanical or electrical failure. This could result in the loss of control of a load or persons.

The following incidents are real and taken from the Health and Safety Executive.

- The supervisor of a firm's fork lift truck drivers was fined £300 after he suffered serious leg injuries when he drove a fork lift truck despite knowing that its brakes were faulty.
- An employee was crushed to death when he was hit by a fork lift truck that was being driven by an untrained driver.
- Three workers were killed when they fell more than 120 metres when the top of a tower crane and its climbing frame overturned.

The incidents above resulted in fines being imposed but the true cost is significantly higher when other factors such as lost time, legal costs, management time, employee relationships and brand damage are taken into account. Additionally, such incidents can also have a negative impact on a customer's commercial insurance programme.

Recommended minimum frequency of inspection

All lifting equipment should be thoroughly examined where there is a risk that deterioration could lead to a dangerous situation.

The table below shows the minimum statutory examination frequencies prescribed in LOLER. However, there is a requirement to assess the actual risks posed by the lifting equipment according to the operations performed in specific circumstances, since those risks may well affect the required frequency of inspections.

6 months	Lifting equipment that lifts people
6 months	Lifting accessories, including shackles, hooks, chains etc.
12 months	All other lifting equipment, including cranes and loading equipment

Alternatively examination frequencies specified in a written scheme based on risk assessments of the equipment may be undertaken.

In addition there is a requirement for examinations to be carried out:

- before the equipment is put into service (unless it has a declaration of conformity dated within the previous 12 months)
- immediately following installation or re-installation
- after an exceptional event, for example, an accident.



Combining expertise and understanding

We've been helping our customers to identify, manage and control engineering business risks for over 80 years. We have a nationwide team of up to 500 highly trained and experienced engineer surveyors.

An individual approach

We understand that all businesses are different, so we take an individual approach and tailor our solutions. We have the knowledge and experience to deal with all aspects of engineering risk as they apply to your business, and will work with you in the way that suits you best.

Investing in people

We invest heavily in training to maintain our engineer surveyors' levels of technical expertise. This includes using the latest online technology to assess our staff and to identify training needs.

We regularly assess and audit our technical staff to ensure that their understanding of key technical and health and safety matters meets our exacting standards. We've established a benchmark for our engineer surveyors and ensure that all of our people are above it.

Harnessing technology

Our engineer surveyors use some of the latest technology when they carry out inspections. For example, their Toughbook laptops allow them to generate reports while they are at your site, resulting in faster, higher quality reports.

The Toughbooks also contain our technical manuals, health and safety procedures and special customer instructions. This comprehensive library of information means that if a technical issue arises during an inspection our engineer surveyors have the answers immediately to hand.

Inspections on time

We work with customers to ensure that plant is examined when required and if an inspection is likely to become overdue, we have systems and processes in place to alert you so that it can quickly be rescheduled. As a consequence your business is less likely to suffer from plant failures, protecting your turnover.

Advice you can trust

We are a Type A (fully independent) UKAS* accredited inspection body and are entirely removed from the manufacture, operation or maintenance of plant. You can therefore be confident that our advice is always independent and objective.

Our technical services team are on hand to discuss any issue a customer might have. These are senior engineers with a vast amount of engineering experience combining industry expertise as diverse as marine, nuclear, petrochemical and mining.

Instant access to engineering reports

Our online reporting tool Crimson gives you instant access to your reports and to management information on our inspection activity wherever and whenever you need it.

It also allows you to see dates for upcoming inspections – so you can plan shutdowns and maintenance work to cause minimum disruption to your business.

*United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Finding out more

If you'd like to find out more about how we can help you with statutory inspections and other areas of engineering risk, please speak to your broker or usual Zurich contact.

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