

SafetyAlert

September 2015

Twin Fatality from Suspended Platform

Two men died after a man basket suspended from a loader crane dropped into the river in Limerick, Ireland.

Three men working for an unnamed sub-contractor were carrying out repairs to the Thomond Bridge from a man basket slung from the hook of a Palfinger articulated loader crane, owned by local company when something broke, dropping the platform into the water. Local reports suggest that it was the hoist cable – the crane was fitted with a boom mounted winch and was working over a single sheave attachment.



All three were wearing life jackets as well as harnesses and lanyards, after the platform sunk into the water, one of them managed to unclip or cut his harness and float to the surface where he was quickly rescued. It is understood that the other two -one in his 20s and one in his 40s - floated to within a metre of the surface but were unable to disconnect themselves from the submerged platform.

Emergency services were quick to attend the incident and rapidly freed the two men, but were unable to revive them. They were declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

Action Required

Following this tragic accident please review your risk assessments to ensure:-

- Suspended Man Cages are only to be employed as a last resort when other access equipment cannot be used.
- All lifting equipment and accessories when lifting personnel have a report of thorough examination dated within the past six months.
- When working next to or over water, water must be assessed to identify whether the greatest risk of injury to the operator is from falling from the Man Cage / MEWP basket or drowning if the Man Cage / MEWP falls into the water. The decision can then be made as to whether it is most appropriate to wear a harness to address the fall risk or whether a harness should not be worn due to the risk of drowning. **Life jackets, not harnesses, should be worn where there is a risk of drowning.**

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact a member of the SHEQ Department.