Crane Oiler Crushed

A crane oiler was crushed between counterweights and the superstructure (base) of a rotating mobile crane.

The victim and the crane operator had a habit of rotating the crane while the victim was not clear of the superstructure. This unsafe practice allowed the victim to signal when crane and counterweights were aligned. On the fatal day, they made eye contact as usual, then the operator turned to the controls.

Without communicating his intention, the victim climbed up on the crane. The investigation suggests he may have removed a shackle left on the counterweights. As the operator swung the crane around, he heard an unfamiliar noise. When he looked, he saw the victim was caught. The operator ran to check on him, then back to the controls to move the crane off him.

The victim died from the blunt-force injuries a few days later.

To communicate, do you and a co-worker rely on a nod or glance? This system may work as long as conditions don’t change. In this fatality, the victim left his usual position. He could have communicated his intention if they had been using two-way radios or other such signaling devices.