

Crane & Hoist

The Business Of Heavy Lifting

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INVESTIGATION

Ship's crane meant for supplies, not personnel, says safety report

Fatality aboard a ship anchored off a Quebec harbour blamed on improper use of a provisions crane

SAUL CHERNOS

The CEO of a company that manages the Canadian-owned ship on which a crew member plunged to his death in a crane mishap last year says it has taken steps to prevent a similar tragedy.

In May 2013, the *Federal Yoshino's* boatswain, or bosun, fell while working from the basket of a provisions crane.

The 190-metre-long bulk carrier had unloaded its cargo of synthetically produced aluminum oxide powder and was anchored just off Baie-Comeau, Que., waiting for a shipment of grain, when crews undertook general maintenance.

In a report issued this May – a year later – the Transportation Safety Board of Canada explained that a corroded port engine room vent had recently been repaired and, working from a steel basket five metres above deck, the bosun was painting the vent.

The bosun, Fildion Remote Layson, a 29-year-old Filipino national, had stopped for a coffee break and was using a push-button remote control to lower the basket to deck level when the hoisting cable snapped.

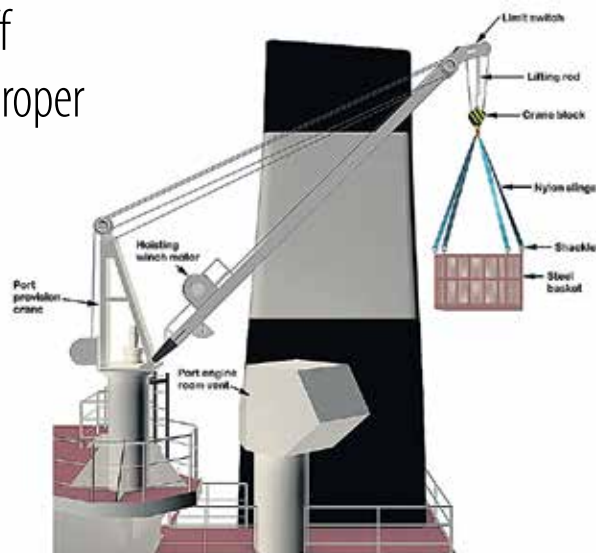


Illustration shows provisions crane on the *Federal Yoshino*. Transportation Safety Board of Canada image

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FORECAST

Overhead crane demand increases across Canada



Wayne Davis, vice-president of Ontario-based O'Brien Installations Ltd., says demand for overhead cranes is coming from all sectors.

From the boom in Alberta's oil patch to metal mining in Ontario, industries are giving a lift to the overhead sector

MATT JONES

Industry representatives are reporting an increased demand for overhead cranes in Canada.

"We're having a great year and there is definitely an increase in demand," said Wayne Davis, vice-president of Ontario-based O'Brien Installations Ltd. "From all sectors too, I wouldn't pin point any one sector that seems to be feeding that market."

Davis did admit, though, that a rise in the pricing of Ontario's natural resources such as nickel and copper has been good for business, particularly

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CRAC WRAP



Jean-Louis Lapointe, the new chairman of the Crane Rental Association of Canada, holds the talking stick at the closing banquet of the association's annual conference in Whistler, B.C., this June.

Photo by Mike Crane for the Crane Rental Association of Canada

Canadian conference sets attendance record

Registered attendees total 308 at CRAC conference in Whistler, B.C.

KEITH NORBURY

More than 300 crane industry representatives and their spouses attended the Crane Rental Association of Canada's annual conference in Whistler, B.C., this June.

The 308 attendees set a record for the conference, which several delegates characterized as the finest since the organization was established in 1997.

"I personally found it to be very informative and enjoyable," said Peter Popoff, equipment sales rep at B.C.-based Parker Pacific Equipment's location in Langley.

Popoff said the conference was the best of the 13 he has attended. Like others did, he cited the quality of the presentations and credited CRAC's board of directors with providing the input to make that possible.

Those presenters included keynote speaker Rose Klukas, economic development officer for the District of Kitimat, who outlined the approximately dozen energy projects now in the pipeline for her north coastal B.C. community.

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Overhead crane demand increases across Canada *continued from cover*

when it comes to metal distribution businesses who work in processing.

“Going back a few years there wasn’t a lot of new business in the metal distribution side,” Davis said. “They weren’t adding any new equipment. They weren’t putting in facilities. Now, they all seem to be quite busy and are, in turn, adding and upgrading cranes.”

On the other hand, Matt Beck, CEO of Alberta-based Masco Crane & Hoist, has no question that his company’s increases in demand are definitely tied to an industry: Alberta’s booming oil industry.

“We have a huge amount of oil here in Alberta due to the oilsands and that’s feeding our manufacturing industries with the creation of new technologies and the increase in facilities,” Beck said. “More buildings are being built to meet the needs of industry. With that, there has definitely been an increase in the demand for overhead cranes.”

Another aspect Beck pointed to is that cranes that were installed 30 to 40 years ago are now nearing the end of their life cycles. Beck said that Masco is often asked to modify, upgrade or outright replace older units.

“Workers aren’t permitted to lift what they were 30 years ago,” Beck said, pointing to another reason for increased overhead crane demand. “It’s taking heavy lifting away from the workers.”

The increase in demand has seen positive returns, not just for crane companies themselves, but for companies that manufacture parts for cranes. Alain Giasson, owner of Montreal-based Vulcan Hoist Company Ltd., says Vulcan sells its hoists to overhead crane manufacturers and resellers who incorporate Vulcan hoists into their products.

“More and more are being used in buildings simply because the cost to install it when the building is being built is relatively low — a few thousand bucks,” Giasson said. “It’s an interesting added benefit whenever the owner wants to rent it either now or in the future. Sometimes the building owner is not the one who’ll be using it — he’ll be a landlord. Even if they’re not sure

“We have a huge amount of oil here in Alberta due to the oilsands and that’s feeding our manufacturing industries with the creation of new technologies and the increase in facilities,” Beck said.

— Matt Beck, CEO, Masco Crane & Hoist

what use it will be, by investing a few thousand dollars they are able to target a much larger audience.”

Another possible cause of the demand, Giasson said, is a declining interest in importing manufactured goods from cheaper markets in Asia.

“People have had lots of issues with quality and transportation costs for things coming from China,” Giasson said. “Manufacturing is getting stronger in Canada. For all of these companies, overhead cranes are interesting. We’re getting more and more business because people are conscious about the environmental impact when you buy from Asia or simply because we have quality that’s been here for 70 years and you’re not sure what you’ll be getting when you’re buying imports.”

Giasson and Davis both agreed that another significant cause for increased interest in overhead cranes are projects related to public infrastructure. Giasson pointed to repairs to the Ottawa area’s Champlain Bridge, for which the contractor of the project contacted Vulcan Hoist with an urgent request for a custom-ordered hoist contraption.

“A lot of municipalities are spending money upgrading waste-water treatment plants, pump centers and stuff like that. It spins off business for us in the crane business,” Davis said. “Does any of that have to do with it being an election year in the province? I don’t know, but they’re talking about creating jobs and a lot of that’s done by updating infrastructure. They’re all spending money creating facilities and a lot of them have cranes in them.”



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