

Lifting Precast Panels

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) Public Consultation

Introduction

As the peak industry body representing the interests of over 10,000 members across the state, Master Builders plays an important role in supporting the health and sustainability of the building and construction sector. Our membership spans the full spectrum of the industry – from residential and commercial builders to subcontractors, manufacturers, and consultants.

This submission is Master Builders' consolidated feedback from the industry on the *Lifting of precast panels position paper* (Position Paper).

We value the opportunity to provide feedback on the Position Paper and welcome the opportunity for continued consultation on the Tilt-Up and Pre-cast Construction Code of Practice 2003 (The Code).

Points of Feedback

Enforcement

What is the policy underpinning the Position Paper and where does it draw its authority for enforcement? Specifically, how will the inspectorate manage demands by Unions to a Principal Contractor or PCBU to use backup lifting systems regardless of the evidence detailed in the Position Paper and any guidance that follows.

Definitions

The Position Paper appears to give a mixed message on the issue of exclusion zones and when backup lifting systems and additional controls should be used. The following are both from the Position Paper:

Workers involved with landing the panel should minimise their time spent in the exclusion zone, should not stand directly under the panel and should avoid being in front of or behind the panel.

AND

Where an exclusion zone for all workers, members of the public and vehicular traffic cannot be implemented during lifting for a distance of 1.25 times the height of the precast panel being lifted (e.g. refer Figure 2), and it is not reasonably practicable to implement a zero-slack back-up lifting system, all of the additional risk control measures detailed below should be adopted to mitigate the residual risk.

This wording implies that no worker can enter the exclusion zone. Clarification concerning exclusion zones is required, particularly in the wording used in the Position Paper.

The view from industry is that there needs to be a specific definitions and examples for **exclusion zone, authorised personnel (riggers, doggers etc)** to enter the **erection zone** to control and place the panel.

The terms **exclusion zone** and **erection zone** are terms used in the Code. It is recommended that the Position Paper uses the terms that are currently used in the Code to better explain the requirements for managing a lift.

Safety Alert

Once the Position Paper has been finalised and published, there must be a Safety Alert that clearly communicates the regulator's position and the requirements for industry.

Lifting clutches

Further clarification is required on the lifting clutches specified in the Position Paper as only one supplier is mentioned. This may lead to a lack of supply, hindering construction programs and potentially the use of non-approved lifting clutches. More information on other approved or suitable lifting clutches to be provided to industry.

Familiarisation training

Formal discussion is required with industry on what the familiarisation training should include. To support this, WHSQ should provide guidelines on what shall be included in the training in the same way as WHSQ has provided with silica training.

Timing

The position paper identifies the need to review the applicable sections of the of the current code. Industry requests a time frame for the review of the current Code following consultation and the re-establishment of a committee to review the consolidated feedback to review the Code.

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