



In the last 10 years, the number of companies specifying radio remote controls has increased dramatically. Over 60% of loader cranes sold within the UK now have them fitted.

Remote controls bring many benefits, particularly in relation to the versatility and positioning options they allow the operator. However, the use of remote controls also creates some significant potential hazards. For this reason, all operators using them should be periodically re-trained and re-assessed in their use, as part of or in addition to the basic lorry loader training they receive.

This leaflet provides a brief refresher to lorry loader operators: to help ensure that the key points covered during training are carried through into the workplace; and to remind them that they are responsible for the safety of themselves and others when in charge of a lorry loader.



The Trade Association for the Lorry Loader Industry



Safety Tips for Operators using Remote Controls

- Always check site rules to confirm that the use of a remote control is permitted.
- Always use the belt / neck strap provided.
- The operator must always be aware of the working area, including their proximity to the load and vehicle.
- Never stand between the load and a fixed object, such as the vehicle or a wall.
- If working with a signaller, agree signals before the lifting operation commences.
- Never walk whilst operating the remote control.
- Always use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always ensure the remote is de-activated when not in use.
- Always store the control unit in a suitable place when not in use.

Safe Use of Remote Controls

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Top Tips for the Safe Use of Remotes

Always check site rules.

Some sites have specific rules in place to prevent the use of radio remote controls - for example, if petrochemicals or sensitive hospital equipment are present or nearby. In such an event, it will be necessary for you to use an alternative method such as the umbilical cord or manual levers. The umbilical cord is also intended for use in the event of a battery failure, so ensure you carry yours at all times and that it remains in good condition.

Always use the belt / neck strap provided.

The belt or neck strap is provided for several reasons, including:

- enabling the operator to make full use of both hands in operating the machine, as opposed to holding onto the control handset;
- ensuring the operator retains possession of the handset at all times;
- and preventing the handset from getting damaged or inadvertently left on-site.

Some companies have specific policies regarding using "only" the neck strap or "only" the waist belt. If this is the case, make sure you follow whatever policy is in place and ensure you are wearing the strap or belt at all times when the remote control is not in its storage position. In addition to the strap and umbilical cord and as part of the pre-operational checks carried out on the lorry loader, you should also check some other items on the remote control handset. Examples of these include: ensuring all the control lever decals are present and legible; that the emergency stop button is intact and functioning; and that you have a spare battery on charge at all times.

Be aware of the working area, including the proximity of you and others to the load and vehicle. Your own positioning as the operator is the key to this. When selecting your position, ensure you have a clear view of the vehicle, the load and its intended path at all times. If this is not possible then a signaller should be used or further persons may

be required (for example, to ensure the working area is not breached).

Never stand between the load and a fixed object, such as the vehicle or a wall.

In addition to the previous point concerning your own positioning, make sure at all times you are not in such a place where an incorrect or unintended movement of the lorry loader can inadvertently trap or crush you. This includes never walking under the boom - whether a load is attached or not!

If working with a signaller, the golden rule is that you agree a set of signals prior to commencing lifting operations.

This should include agreeing a way of ensuring that the operator confirms he has isolated the controls prior to the slinger/signaller approaching the load to attach or remove it.

Never walk whilst operating the remote control.

A popular misconception is that radio remote controls are designed to permit the operator to both walk and operate the machine at the same time.

This is wrong!! Operating whilst walking is highly dangerous; as the operator is unable to concentrate on where he is going and keep his eye on the load at the same time. If you need to re-position then isolate the controls before moving. Once you are suitably situated and standing still,

make a quick all-round check before re-engaging the controls and proceeding. There should be no exceptions to this!

Always ensure the remote is de-activated when not in use.

In addition to the previous point, it is equally important to ensure the remote control handset is isolated at all times when not in use. Inadvertently catching the handset with a coat sleeve or other article when attaching or removing a load, or exiting the cab for example, can have potentially fatal consequences. Just simply isolating the controls can totally prevent the risk of crushing or trapping.

Always store the control unit in a suitable place when not in use.

Remote control handsets are not only dangerous in the hands of untrained persons, they are also extremely expensive to replace if they get lost or damaged. For this reason, unless you are wearing the remote control handset in the prescribed manner, you should always ensure it is in its designated storage place. It is not uncommon for the crane installer to fit a specially designed docking station and even a warning device to prevent you driving away without the remote stowed. However, and whatever is fitted to your truck, you are responsible for ensuring your remote control handset is either worn properly or stored properly at all times.

In addition to these tips and to summarise: it should be noted that companies have different rules concerning the wearing of handsets whilst accessing / egressing vehicles and whilst attaching loads - so of course your company's safe system of work should be followed at all times. However, and in the absence of a prescribed method, a good general guide is that if you are wearing it whilst not in use then isolate the levers at all times. If you are not wearing it - put it in the cab or its designated docking station.

Remember, **you as the operator are solely responsible** for ensuring you operate the lorry loader in accordance with the training you have received and the loader crane manufacturer's instructions. Remote controls can be a great tool if used properly and safely.

If you see another operator using a remote controlled lorry loader incorrectly, please help them to protect themselves by sharing the advice contained within this leaflet.

Do it right - for your sake!

FREE web-based awareness / refresher video and Toolbox Talk template

As part of its campaign to raise awareness of the safe use of remote controls, ALLMI has produced a short web-based awareness / refresher video, as well as a Toolbox Talk template. Both the video and the template can be viewed / downloaded free of charge from www.allmi.com. Alternatively, please contact ALLMI for a copy of the Toolbox Talk, as well as a copy of the video file which can be uploaded to your company's website.

