CrewSigned

Crane Safety Toolbox Talk

5-minute read-aloud · Last reviewed November 24, 2026

When a crane is on site, everyone on the job is around it, not just the operator and the riggers. Crane accidents are rare compared to other hazards, but when they happen they are often deadly, and they can hurt people who were not part of the lift at all. Today we are covering what every person on site needs to know.

First, stay out of the swing radius. The back of a crane turns as the boom swings, and it can crush a person against another object. That area should be barricaded or marked. If you need to go inside it, the operator has to know you are there and agree before you enter.

Second, never walk or work under a suspended load. Rigging can slip, slings can fail, and loads can swing or drop. Walk around, not under. When you are guiding a load, use a tag line so you can control it from a distance, and keep your hands and feet out from between the load and anything solid.

Third, signals. There is one designated signal person for a lift, and the operator follows that person. The one exception is stop. Anyone who sees a problem can signal stop, and the operator must obey it. Signal persons and riggers need to be qualified for the job they are doing, so do not just step in to help.

Fourth, power lines. Contact with overhead lines is one of the leading causes of crane deaths. Before work starts, we find out where the lines are and how close the crane and the load will come. If the voltage is not known, the rule of thumb is to keep the equipment and load at least twenty feet away. When the crane is working near lines, there may be a spotter whose only job is to watch that clearance.

Fifth, the ground. A crane is only as stable as what it sits on. Outriggers need solid footing, and nobody should be digging, trenching or parking heavy loads near the setup without checking first.

Before each lift, the crew should know the weight of the load, the rigging plan, who is signaling and where everyone will stand. If something looks wrong, call stop.

Discussion questions

1. Where is the swing radius of the crane on this job marked, and who is allowed inside it?
2. Who is the signal person for today's picks, and how will the operator know if signals change hands?
3. Where are the power lines near the crane, and what is our plan to keep the boom and load clear of them?

OSHA standard

29 CFR 1926 Subpart CC, Cranes and Derricks in Construction
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926SubpartCC

SOURCES

Cranes and Derricks in Construction, Small Entity Compliance Guide for the Final Rule (OSHA 3433): https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OSHA3433.pdf
Cranes and Derricks in Construction: Signal Person Qualification Fact Sheet: https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CRANES-SIGNAL-PERSON-FACTSHEET.pdf
OSHA Safety and Health Topics, Cranes, Derricks and Hoists: https://www.osha.gov/cranes-derricks

This talk does not replace training that an OSHA standard requires. Scripts are based on OSHA and NIOSH publications and rewritten in plain language.

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

TOPIC

Crane Safety Toolbox Talk

COMPANY

JOB / SITE

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TIME

PRESENTER

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