

# Groundhog UK Ltds' solution to working at height

## Information sheet WPT13

This case study is part of a series, which give examples of good practice to reduce injuries due to falls from vehicles through sensible management of health and safety risks in the workplace.

## The challenge

Safe loading and unloading has always been a problem within the construction industry in terms of working at height safely. Portable cabins are constantly being moved to and from sites. The traditional method of attaching slings/chains to cabins is standard for the transport industry but it normally requires an operator to make use of a ladder to ascend/descend or even go onto the roof of a cabin to attach the lifting gear. This type of operation increases the likelihood of a fall and subsequent injury to any persons carrying out the task. Previous control methods include the use of harnesses, attached to the lifting hook of the crane being used, to lift the container.

## Finding a solution

Acutely aware of the risks associated with this problem, Groundhog UK Ltd thought about developing a method that would eliminate most of the risk. The company designed a system that would allow operators to load/unload cabins without resorting to climbing to or on the roof. This means the process can always be undertaken as a ground-level operation, eliminating work at height – the primary method of control for the Work at Height Regulations.

Four slotted steel channel sections, secured to the cabin, replace the normal jackleg fittings and within each channel section there is a wheeled carriage fitted with a lifting eye. The steel channel section runs the height of the container with a lower section still retaining the function of the jacklegs.



Figure 1 Lifting point attached to leg of cabin

As gravity keeps the carriage at its lowest point, the lifting eyes are always reachable from the ground. This means that the operator is able to attach lifting gear to the eye, which is joined to the carriage, without resorting to the use of a ladder. This can be done when the container is on the ground or mounted on a vehicle. Once the slings/chains are attached to the four 'Hoglifts' the lifting operation can commence

and, as the operator takes up the slack, the carriages will run vertically, within the channel sections, to the top of the cabin where a stop is fitted. From this point on, the lift is performed as normal. When lowering and when the container is no longer under load, the carriages will run down within the channel sections, under gravity, to the normal rest position where the slings/chains can be released.

The four 'Hoglifts' are either fitted during manufacture or sold as a kit of four to be fitted by the customer.

## The results

Operators' loading/unloading cabins are no longer at risk from falls normally associated with this type of operation. Operators can ultimately save time by not having to use additional equipment, including harnesses in some cases. The system is also easy to use and very little training is required.



Figure 1 Lifting onto the trailer

## Further information

HSE website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

Workplace transport: [www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport)

Slips and trips: [www.hse.gov.uk/slips](http://www.hse.gov.uk/slips)

Falls from height: [www.hse.gov.uk/falls](http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls)

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*Balford Beatty introduces safety solutions* WPT15  
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