

Lifting Operations Guidance Note

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance note is to advise harbour & pier users of the Fife Council requirements for undertaking any lifting operation at a Fife Council Harbour or Pier to ensure that all lifting operations carried out comply with applicable regulations and are completed safely. This guidance is aligned with the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER), which are a mandatory requirement for all lifting operations and are the basis for planning and executing safe lifting operations.

Requirements

All requests for lifting operations at the Fife Council Harbours and Piers shall be submitted to the Harbours@fife.gov.uk email address at least 2 weeks (genuine emergency situations will be considered on a shorter timescale, but on the whole the same requirements will apply) ahead of any proposed lifting operation. The following information shall be submitted with each request: -

- 1) Copy of the current valid certificate of "thorough examination" for the mobile crane / lorry mounted crane and all associated slings / chains / shackles to be used in the lift, as required by the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (note all lifting equipment used must be marked with the safe working load),
- 2) Copy of training certificates for the lifting equipment operator and the "competent person" planning and supervising the lift (refer to the regulations and Approved Code of Practice for the definition of "competent person"),
- 3) Copy of Lift Plan for the lift (i.e. risk assessment and method statement) which describes all the safety precautions to be applied and needs to be written by a "competent person" as defined in the regulations (refer to the Approved Code of Practice for details of the content of a Lift Plan) (note lift organisers must exclude the general public from the area used for the lifting operations using barriers and a crowd control marshall/s and this shall be stated in the Lift Plan),
- 4) Valid insurance certificates for the Crane Operator and Vessel Owner covering the craning operation itself and the vessel.

It is noted that the Harbour Master or member of the Fife Council Harbours Team must be present during all lifting operations and these must take place during Harbour Office / Office opening times, unless otherwise agreed with the Harbour Master or member of the Fife Council Harbours Team.

We would direct you to the HSE website (<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-equipment-machinery/loler.htm>) for further information if you are unsure of what is required to plan and carry out a safe lift in accordance with the regulations.

Recommendations Based on 2020 Lift In Experiences

We were generally satisfied with the planning and execution of all lifting operations carried out at Fife Council Harbours and Piers during the summer of 2020. We were particularly pleased with the efforts put in by all parties organising lifting operations this summer in regard to Covid-19 mitigation measures, which have posed a major challenge to all organised activities this year. So thanks to all those involved.

However, lift planning and lift supervision remains a topic we all must address by continuing to seek improvement in the training of the individuals responsible for planning and supervising lifting operations. LOLER are clear, and state that a lifting operation must be planned by a "competent person" and appropriately supervised. The LOLER Approved Code of Practice and guidance (ACOP) goes on to define a "competent person" and "appropriate supervision". Whilst we appreciate that competence can be demonstrated by experience or training or a mixture of both,

we would strongly encourage those organisations or groups of individuals who organise lifting operations to ensure that they are either training individuals to undertake the lift planning and supervision roles or use competent individuals with up to date training from external organisations such as crane hire companies. Developing this skill set within organisations or groups who have traditionally organised lifting operations in the past will ensure that future lifting operations can be planned and executed in a safe manner whilst demonstrating compliance with evolving regulations.

It was noted that many of the Lift Plans provided in the summer of 2020 included the Fife Council Harbour Master in a supervisory / crowd control role. Unfortunately, the Harbour Masters are not able to be part of the Lifting Operations as the lifts are organised and managed by third parties not Fife Council. The lift organisers need to provide all lift supervision, load handling, and crowd control for the lifting operation. The Harbour Master will usually be in attendance, but is only there to ensure the safety of other harbour users, vessels, and the public and to ensure that the piers are not damaged.

Another matter that needs further attention in the future is the use of large mobile cranes at the Fife Council Harbours and Piers. As you are all aware the Fife Council Harbours and Piers are historic in nature and are not modern high capacity quaysides that you would find in a port. Whilst limiting the locations of craning activities and maintaining a 2m edge distance will help reduce the risk of damage to the piers, in the longer term we would be keen to see a move away from large mobile cranes in locations where this is practical. A number of lifts this year including a multi boat lift in event as well as individual lifts used a high capacity lorry mounted crane or "hiab" instead of a mobile crane and this not only greatly reduces the loadings on the piers but can also prove more cost effective than a mobile crane. Whilst the use of a "hiab" potentially means some additional movement of the lorry during lifting operations as the reach of a "hiab" will be less than a conventional mobile crane, we would ask that all organisations / groups of individuals organising lifting operations consider this option before adopting a large mobile crane. We will be discussing this further with all organisations / groups during 2021 to see what can be reasonably achieved.

Another matter that has been raised with us is in regard to single boat lifts and the burden that the above requirements places on an individual owner in terms of finding competent persons to plan and supervise the lifting operation. Whilst we understand that this is an issue, it is necessary to fully implement all applicable aspects of LOLER at the Fife Council Harbours and Piers and this does mean that individual lifts need to be treated the same as group lifts.

A final matter that has been raised with us is in regard to emergency lifts (e.g. if a damaged vessel needs lifted to prevent sinking, etc.). Where possible damaged vessels should be beached / slipped in liaison with the Harbour Master, and repaired (temporarily or permanently) in situ where possible. However, we understand that there may be occasions where a genuine emergency may occur requiring a rapid lift of a boat, and in those circumstances the authorisation of the Harbour Master / Harbours Team must be sought and we will still as a minimum look for the use of a reputable crane / hiab company who can if possible provide certificates of thorough examination for the crane and lifting equipment, evidence of competence of the crane operator, insurance documents, and a lifting plan (a generic plan would be acceptable in a genuine emergency). However, an emergency lift would still need to be performed in an area temporarily excluding other harbour users and the public, but the Harbour Master may be able to assist with this in a genuine emergency by closing a pier to enable the lifting operation.

Review

It is intended that this guidance note will be reviewed and developed on an annual basis in liaison with those carrying out lifting operations at the Fife Council Harbours and Piers.