

Fewer crane incidents but there's room for improvement: Zaqy

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There are fewer safety incidents involving cranes but more can be done to improve the safety of such operations, said Minister of State for Manpower and National Development Zaqy Mohamad.

The number of such dangerous occurrences has fallen from 22 in 2015 to 12 last year, he told more than 400 participants yesterday at the eighth edition of the Workplace Safety and Health Symposium on Cranes at the HDB Hub.

"We should not be complacent, but be further motivated to make crane operations even safer for our workers. One way we can do so is through technology," he said.

For example, some landscaping companies here use mechanised cranes with claws and saws to cut tree branches. Workers no longer need to stand in an elevated man-basket to operate the crane but can do so using a joystick on the ground.

Mr Zaqy said the introduction of data loggers in mobile cranes since 2015 has helped to boost safety, with the number of dangerous occurrences involving mobile cranes dropping from 11 in 2015 to three last year. For these three cases, the data loggers installed enabled investigators to access critical information such as weight of load at the time.

The Ministry of Manpower is working with industry stakeholders to test a second-generation of data loggers, which will have real-time video monitoring and recording features. In the event of a safety breach, instant alerts will be sent to stakeholders.

The ministry is also testing drones for crane visual inspections and looking into using 3D mapping



Minister of State Zaqy Mohamad (centre) trying out Salestrade Corporation's radio control system, which lets an operator control a crane remotely. With him are (from left) Mr Ismadi Mohd (in dark blue shirt), director, OSH Specialist Department, Occupational Safety & Health, Manpower Ministry; Mr Mohamed Abdul Akbar, chairman, WSH Council National Crane Safety Taskforce; Mr Raymond Wee, Salestrade's managing director; and Mr John Ng, chairman, WSH Council. PHOTO: WSH COUNCIL

for accident investigation.

Crane-related dangerous occurrences, as classified by the Workplace Safety and Health Act, include the collapse or failure of a crane, derrick, winch, hoist, piling frame or other appliances used in raising or

lowering persons or goods, or the overturning of a crane.

Firms are also using technology to improve safety and efficiency.

Mr Senguttuvan Nagarajan, head of environmental, health and safety at construction firm Dragages Singa-

pore, said the company uses self-balancing lifting frames for the modules in Prefabricated Prefinished Volumetric Construction (PPVC).

PPVC is a building method where large modules complete with finishes are manufactured in factories

and assembled on-site.

"Usually, the weight is not evenly distributed because of the different units, but this new technology with the self-balancing feature has helped us to have no safety issues and gives our employees more con-

12

Number of safety incidents involving cranes last year, down from 22 in 2015.

fidence," Mr Nagarajan said.

Engineering firm ZLX Engineering has produced anti-collision technology where an alarm beeps when a crane gets close to another crane. When two cranes are too close, the system will be locked to prevent the operator from moving the crane.

Meanwhile, industrial solutions provider Salestrade Corporation provides companies with remote controls so the cranes can be operated by someone outside the cabin. This omits the dangers of working from height, as the operator can work from the ground or another building.

However, it is not just about technology but also the adoption of such tools by companies, said Singapore Cranes Association manager Alson Ang. His association represents over 60 companies and industry business associates.

He said: "It is about convincing companies to take it on. The challenge is the cost, lack of knowledge of how to use the technology on the ground and the many choices that are available. They need to have a clear picture so they can prioritise what they need step by step and have benchmarks on how they can improve their operations."

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