

# HOISTING SIGNALS – BASIC RULES

## IDENTIFY

In hoisting operations, miscommunication between signaler and operator can lead to disaster for people or property.

In many cases, hand signals are the most efficient form of communication between riggers and crane operators. Over the years, a system of standard hand signals has evolved that is now international.

## COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

If you're going to rig a load, you also need to know the signals for lifting, moving, and landing it. The operation may be a simple "lift" and "lower." Or it may require more complicated signals.

On construction sites, signaling is required in the following situations:

- When the operator cannot see the load.
- When the operator cannot see the load landing area.
- When the operator cannot see the path of travel of either the load or the crane.
- When the operator is too far from the load to judge distance accurately.
- When the crane or other hoisting device is working close to live powerlines or equipment.

There is a signal for each action of the crane from "boom up" and "load down" to "travel forward" and "stop."

By using the correct hand signals, you can effectively communicate with the crane operator. The operator only needs to clearly see and understand your signals.

Here are some ground rules for signaling:

- The signaler must be a competent worker, which means qualified due to knowledge, experience, and training.
- Only one person should signal the operator. But anyone can give the "stop" signal and it must be obeyed immediately.
- Signals should be clear and, wherever possible, barehanded.

- The load should be directed so that it never passes over anyone.
- Operators should not make a move until they receive and understand your signal. If contact between you and the operator is broken for any reason, the operation must stop.
- Some situations call for two signalers. For instance, during a concrete pour, one signaler may be needed to direct the lift while the other directs the drop.
- Where a difficult lift demands voice communication, use two-way radios instead of hand signals.
- Hand signals have their limitations. For example, they should never be used when distance, visibility, or noise prevents accurate communication with the operator.

# THE QUIZ

1. A system of standard hand signals has evolved and it is now internationally known:  
TRUE \_\_\_\_\_ FALSE \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you're going to rig a load, you also need to know the signals for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

3. On construction sites, signaling is required in the following situations — list two:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_

4. There is a signal for each action of the crane — list two examples:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_

5. List three ground rules for signaling:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_



**ANSWERS:**

1. TRUE; 2. Lifting, moving, landing; 3. Operator cannot see the load, operator cannot see the travel path; 4. Raise the load, lower the load; 5. Clear signals, one person — unless circumstances change, ANYONE can give the "stop" signal