

SAFETY ALERT



AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE
SAFETY GROUP

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"A vision of a safer steel industry"

Number:	SA0036
Subject:	Personnel Awareness in Plate Storage Areas
Date	August 2009

Incident:

- In November 2008, an employee working in a plate storage area reported an incident where an overhead crane had approached unnoticed. The employee was crouching down behind a stack of plates, counting inventory, when the unloaded crane approached within three metres. Subsequent discussions between the employee and the crane operator revealed that neither person knew of the other's presence.
- Contributing Factors
 - Employee had entered the warehouse wearing a high visibility vest and been acknowledged by the crane operators. The crane operator was not aware of the employee location ten minutes later.
 - Procedure / protocol for personnel entry to plate facilities / warehouse were not developed.
 - Employee was working amongst tall stacks (~1500mm high)
 - Lighting conditions were good, but may worsen during hours of darkness.



Plate Stack with Light Beacon on end. (Orange)

Key Lessons:

- Entry protocols into the warehouse must be developed and communicated to all personnel. Protocol to include notification to operators, activity to be undertaken and location(s).
- Material stacks such as plate can create a hazard for visual identification of personnel even in the event of wearing correct Hi-Vis clothing.

Recommendations:

- Personnel to follow developed protocols for warehouse entry.
- Enhance personnel visibility, through use of a "Personnel Location Beacon" (Flashing light – battery operated) when working in Plate handling areas. Toolbox talks to discuss the purpose and use of the light beacons.
- Crane operators to plan travel path considering visibility when working in proximity to high stacks of materials such as plate and lighting conditions.

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