

SUSPENDED LOADS



Many workplaces throughout Australia will have suspended loads on site in one way or another, be it through the use of a forklift, using any type of crane or mobile plant to lift materials, equipment and even removing parts from under a vehicle.

Look out for suspended loads as they are not always obvious, for example, a bucket on the end of a excavator boom is a suspended load. If not attached properly, it could drop and have major consequences.

Suspended loads can cause injury and property damage through various ways, including:

- Lifting equipment, such as straps, chains or beams, failing.
- Loads shifting during movement and falling.
- Loads moving and striking nearby personnel or buildings.
- Loads assessed or rigged incorrectly.
- Ground stability not assessed for the lift, resulting in the lifting equipment failing.
- Inadequately trained operators making poor decisions.
- Workers not identifying the potential for the load to fall
- A load unexpectedly falling, such as a tree branch

Suspended loads can be extremely dangerous in and out of the workplace.

When working near or around suspended loads:

- Ensure a risk assessment is completed to identify potential risks
- Make sure that pre-operational checks of the task, lifting equipment, lifting attachments, lugs and hooks are completed by a competent person
- Look at the environment around where the object will be moved - are there live wires, busbars, moving machines or traffic
- Know the weight of the load and the lifting capacity of the lifting equipment and attachment
- Identify if the ground is stable and strong enough to support the lifting equipment.
- DO NOT EXCEED LIFTING CAPACITY
- Keep the area clear of people and moving plant –the area must be a 'No-Go' zone until the suspension or move of the load has finished
- Never stand or place any part of your body under a suspended load
- When a load needs guiding use a tagline, don't move it by hand as you can be struck by the load
- Any assessment of loads needed to be completed by a qualified rigger
- On the special occasions where you do and are authorised to work under suspended loads, such as removing a vehicle part from under a truck, ensure that the load is supported to prevent it from falling and don't put yourself in the line of fire