



Guidance Note 2018.03.01: Banksman and Slingsman/Signallers

The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires that all employers take steps to minimise and prevent accidents happening to their employees. Where individuals are concerned, they should always have had the required and appropriate training in order for them to be able to carry out their duties in a safe manner and environment.

In the sign industry, the use of banksmen and slingers/signallers will affect sign installers and sign companies that install in the main, totems and monoliths and in any case where Hiabs or cranes are used. Training for employees and sub contracted operatives involved in this activity is a priority.

On site, it is now common to be asked if you have the appropriate training or licence to either direct vehicles or signal the offloading of goods (slinging).

It is also pertinent to note that having one of these licences does not pre-suppose that you are entitled to do the other job. Someone with a signaller/slingsman licence will be prevented from offloading because there must be someone trained and licenced on site to move the vehicle into the correct position and vice versa.

Most accidents and damage to property and equipment can be avoided by taking simple precautions, such as those below.

Guidance

It should always be the case that drivers upon entering a site, report to reception and obtain the necessary route guidance and any site rules.

What is a banksman

A Vehicle Banksman is the person who is trained to oversee the directing and movements of large vehicles on a work site, particularly large cranes during loading and unloading. They are often called traffic marshals

- Consider employing a trained banksman both to keep the area free of pedestrians and to guide drivers. Be aware: The use of banksmen is not allowed in some industries due to the size of vehicles involved, and the difficulty that drivers have in seeing them.
- A banksman:
 - Will need to use a clear, agreed system of signalling.
 - Will need to be visible to drivers at all times.
 - Will need to stand in a safe position, from which to guide the reversing vehicle without being in its way.
 - Should wear very visible clothing, such as reflective vests, and ensure that any signals are clearly seen.
- If drivers lose sight of the banksman, they should know to stop immediately.
- Consider whether portable radios or similar communication systems.

Can you use banksmen for reversing vehicles?

Yes, but only if trained and authorised. There is a hierarchy of control which places segregation at the top. Banksmen should only be used in circumstances where other control measures are not possible.

Using banksmen to control reversing operations can put the Banksman in the potential danger area of a reversing vehicle. Every year banksmen suffer serious and fatal injuries whilst at work. There must be a safe system of work that ensures the Banksman and driver are using standard signals, so that they are easily understood, and that the driver knows to stop the vehicle immediately if the Banksman disappears from view.

What is a slinger/signaller?

Signallers are operatives who are trained to direct crane drivers during lifting operations.

The job of a slinger/signaller requires skill and concentration as they play a vital role in the lifting team. They must know and understand both the regulatory requirements of their job and the operational requirements of the lifting operation. And they must be trained and competent in all aspects of their work. The duties of a slinger/signaller include:

- Carrying out visual pre-use checks of the lifting accessories.
- Attaching the load to the crane correctly and in accordance with the lifting plan
- Giving the appropriate signals to the crane operator for the lifting, transferring and positing of loads in a safe manner
- Detaching the load from the crane
- Ensuring that the lifting accessories are stored correctly and reporting any defects

It is the employer's and/or Owner of the business's responsibility to:

- ensure that both banksmen and slinger/signallers are trained and competent to fulfil the duties required of them. For your own employees this is a requirement. If you are sub-contracting the work, you should ensure that the operatives are qualified to do the job otherwise it could turn out expensive if they are not allowed to operate on site without the appropriate licences and you have to re-arrange delivery and installation.
- provide distinctive 'hi viz' clothing for identification
- tell drivers that if they cannot see the signaller they should stop immediately
- agree on the use of standard signals

You'll find the standard signals in the Health and Safety (Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996 L64, or watch the HSE video Workplace Transport – Banksman's Signals **here**.