



Hazard Alert

Tuesday, 11 March 2003

WHOSE INSTRUCTIONS WOULD YOU FOLLOW?

At a recent meeting of Safety Representatives, it was noted that the instructions for the installation of an Alimak Hoist claimed that a flap was not needed between the edge of the lift and the building if the gap is less than 100mm. Common sense tells us that this is ridiculous. We all know that a small heavy object could fall through the gap and, depending on the height of the lift at the time, could gather considerable force before it hit the ground - or whatever is underneath. We also know that if there is a person underneath who is not wearing a hard hat, they could be severely injured.



This is a good example of the need to use your own brains and knowledge in construction work, because many people don't understand the nature of the work and what might seem all right in an office is not all right "on the coal face."

Section 70.4 of the Occupational Health and Safety (Plant) Regulations 1995, *Employer's duty to undertake control of risk*, states

(1) An employer must ensure that any risk associated with plant and associated systems of work, including installation, erection, commissioning and use of plant-

- (a) is eliminated; or*
- (b) if it is not practicable to eliminate the risk, is reduced so far as practicable.*

Employers should do their own hazard identification and not rely on others ideas about what is safe. Unfortunately it is often up to Safety Reps and other workers to do identify hazards and control the risks.

Instruction booklets and leaflets are often produced interstate or overseas and don't take Victorian standards into account.

Always assess any plant that comes onto your site according to the relevant

Victorian regulations.

It's the same old message. If you don't think it's safe, don't do it. If you're not sure, get more information, but don't get pressured into doing something that doesn't seem right, because if you're lucky you might live to regret it, but if you're not, it'll be your family wishing you had "just said no."