



# MAKING WAVES

**Safety standards covering loader cranes are due to be updated in 2019, which might affect their use of remote controls. Chris Tindall tunes into the wireless**

**W**ireless technology for loader cranes has certainly progressed over the last decade. Lorry loader trade association ALLMI has estimated that more than 60% of loader cranes sold in the UK now have them fitted, and crane manufacturer Palfinger UK's own sales of radio remote-controlled loaders are an even higher proportion.

Alan Johnson, Palfinger UK general manager, says: "Standards are usually evolved to keep up with whatever is considered state of the art and therefore reasonably practicable. In terms of radio remote controls, the level of demand continues to grow. Some of the benefits are operational, as opposed to safety related – for example a better view for the operator to permit more precision in placing loads, and so on. These can in some cases create safety issues, for example an operator becoming trapped between the load and an immovable object such as the truck or a wall."

Just that occurred a few years ago,

with fatal consequences. A 2015 inquiry in Scotland found that an experienced HGV driver working for family business Strawberry Corner Garden Centre died as a result of being crushed by the crane boom and brick clamp of his remote-controlled loader crane.

The inquiry found that, in the absence of witnesses, it was "most likely" Alan Bussell's remote control console was operated accidentally while it was secured around his neck.

Lacking any evidence of faulty device

design or performance, the conclusion was that the accident would most likely have been avoided if the console had been rendered incapable of inadvertent use, either by it being removed from his neck when the crane was not being used, or by isolating the remote control while loads were being prepared for attachment to the brick clamp.

It concluded: "Such precautions are a matter for training, and form part of any safe system of work in such circumstances."

A revision of loader crane standards by a European working group is currently in production, and it is understood that changes to the use of wireless remote controls could feature. BS EN 12999 was first published in 2003; manufacturers and installers of loader cranes must adhere to this standard. A host of amendments have followed in the ensuing years. [TE](#)

## HACK ATTACK

Another area of concern for users of wireless devices, which may not be immediately obvious, is the potential for hacking. In October, the US government's industrial control systems cyber emergency response team (ICS-CERT) reported a vulnerability in a crane remote control, the Telecrane F25. It warned that a successful hack could allow someone to take control of the device. A firmware upgrade to version 00.0A, which is available from distributors, fixes the issue.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

ALLMI 'Safe Use of Remote Controls' leaflet and video from 2013 – <https://is.gd/icinuk>  
EN 12999 progress – <https://is.gd/iwexar>