

New Suspended Personnel Platform Regulations

The most recent publication of ASME B30.5 (2004) became effective on September 27, 2005, replacing the previous edition dated 2002. This volume of the B30 standard previously contained requirements for suspended personnel platforms. Now, the volume directs crane users to follow the requirements of ASME B30.23, Personnel Lifting Systems, and the requirements of the crane manufacturer. There are important changes contained in B30.23 that crane users must now follow, and this article will familiarize you with many of them.

Chapter 1 of the B30.23 volume describes construction of the platform, rigging, and hoisting equipment. Existing equipment is not required to be retrofitted, but suspension slings must now be tagged individually and the master link must be marked with capacity and identified as a component of a personnel lifting system. Synthetic web and synthetic fiber rope slings may not be used for personnel platforms. Hoisting equipment permitting free fall on the hoist line must now have that capability rendered inoperable. This represents a significant change from B30.5 and federal OSHA regulations. As a result, many cranes will no longer be able to be used for this work.

Chapter 2 of the volume discusses *Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance*. Under B30.5 a daily inspection of the platform was required. The new regulation mandates three inspections: initial; frequent; and periodic. The initial is required before first use, and at each new job site. The frequent inspection is required at least once each day, before use. The periodic inspection must be performed at least every twelve months, and by a qualified person. Written records – not required by B30.5 – are now required for the frequent inspection on the platform and the hoisting equipment. In addition, the periodic inspection must be in writing and available for review.

Both the former and the new regulations stipulate a **proof test** and trial lift. The new regulation requires a test load of 125% **of platform rating** during the proof test, reduced from 200%. After **repair or modification** of the platform, however, the proof test **load increases to 150%** and also includes a provision for a dynamic test. **The requirement for the trial lift** is contained in chapter 3 *Operation* under “**things the operator shall do**”. While the old regulation required an empty **platform**, the new one requires that the

platform be loaded with anticipated weight during the trial lift. . The new regulation specifies how often a trial lift will be performed; it is now required each day, and at each new crane set up.

Chapter 3 includes additional new requirements, such as the following:

- A crane operator cannot start a personnel lift after 10 hours at work, and must complete all personnel lifting when reaching 12 hours at work. Operators must not work 8 hours prior to the shift requiring personnel lifting.
- Operators must meet the qualification requirements contained in the appropriate B30 volume.
- Platform occupants must be trained in the recognized hazards associated with this work.
- Management must institute a personnel lifting program and prepare a site-specific plan as part of job site records.
- Personnel platforms shall not be used when wind exceeds 20 mph. The old requirement directed they should not be used when wind exceeded 15 mph.
- The personnel lift supervisor shall conduct a pre-lift meeting prior to a series of personnel lifts. Whenever new workers arrive, they must also be briefed.
- The power controlled lowering mechanism must be engaged every time the platform is occupied.
- The operator should avoid deploying multiple machine functions unless safety is improved by doing so.
- When lifted over water, platform occupants must wear flotation devices and tie off using quick disconnect devices.
- Occupants can not exit or enter a suspended platform unless the platform has an installed gate.
- Hand signals and their meanings must be posted in the platform as well as other locations required by B30.5 or federal OSHA.
- Several important appendices appear at the end of the new regulation. They include requirements for hoisting people near power lines, lift planning and authorization form, and platform inspection.

If you or your company performs, or will perform, this type of work, I highly recommend that you become familiar with - and follow - **these new regulations**. For the complete text of the volume **contact ASME at www.asme.org or 800-843-2762.**