

ACOP

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Thorough examination

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301 You should identify equipment which requires a thorough examination and ensure that it is thoroughly examined. The risks which could arise from the failure of the lifting equipment will determine how thorough the examination should be.

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302 Thorough examination is needed at several points during the life of lifting equipment:

- (a) on initial use or following installation;
- (b) periodically during its life to ensure it remains fit for use; and
- (c) following certain exceptional circumstances, eg if it is damaged.

303 Where a piece of lifting equipment's safety depends on the installation conditions, it must be thoroughly examined before it is put into service for the first time to ensure that it is installed correctly and safe to operate. If lifting equipment (such as a tower crane) is subsequently moved to a new site, it should be thoroughly examined again at the new site after it has been installed but before it is put into service.

304 Before you use any item of lifting equipment for the first time, unless:

- (a) it has not been used before and has an EC declaration of conformity made not more than 12 months before being put into service; or
- (b) you have received physical evidence that the last required thorough examination has been carried out which shows that it is safe to use; then

it should be thoroughly examined by a competent person. The extent of the thorough examination will depend on an assessment of the risks based on the type of lifting equipment, where it is installed and how it is to be used.

305 All lifting equipment deteriorates in use and, where this is liable to result in dangerous situations, it should be thoroughly examined so that deterioration can be detected in sufficient time to allow remedial action to be taken. Deterioration can occur more quickly in certain conditions such as wet, abrasive or corrosive environments and this equipment will need to be thoroughly examined more frequently. The competent person will determine the level of thorough examination required based on an assessment of the risks.

306 No definition of 'dangerous situation' is provided but PUWER has a similar provision at regulation 6 which states that *'Where work equipment is of a type where the safe operation is critically dependent on its condition in use and deterioration would lead to a significant risk to the operator or other worker, you should arrange for suitable inspections to be carried out.'* Lifting equipment failure may also impact on others, eg when loads are lifted over occupied areas or where collapse can cause damage to other equipment or property, or where the load being moved can cause additional damage, eg explosive, chemicals etc.

307 A thorough examination is also required following any significant change which may affect the safe operation of the lifting equipment. These include:

- (a) its involvement in an accident or dangerous occurrence such as overloading, component failure etc;
- (b) after a significant change in conditions of use such as increase in use, change in loading (eg from inert loads to chemicals) or work environment (eg moving from indoor to outdoor use); and
- (c) long periods out of use.

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308 For certain types of thorough examination, access to inner workings of the equipment may be required. This may require it to be stripped down or covers to be removed.

309 Where a thorough examination may require entry into a confined space, within the meaning of the Confined Spaces Regulations 1997, every effort should be taken to conduct the examination without entering the confined space. Where this is not possible, you must comply with the requirements of those Regulations. Advice can be found in *Safe work in confined spaces* L101.²⁵

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Load testing

310 The competent person should decide whether or not a load test is necessary, and the nature of the test, as part of the thorough examination.

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311 The design of certain lifting equipment is such that damage may be caused by conventional overload tests. The competent person carrying out the thorough examination or testing should take account of the instructions and other relevant information, eg regularity of such testing, provided by the manufacturer.

312 Other testing may be carried out as part of the thorough examination where the competent person considers they are required to properly assess the safety of the equipment, eg non-destructive tests.

Regulation 9(1)

313 This applies to accessories for lifting as well as to lifting equipment. The extent of the initial thorough examination may depend upon the extent of the information available to the competent person on which to base a judgement.

314 In the case of new equipment the 'thorough examination' is considered to have been carried out by the manufacturer or supplier and confirmed in the Declaration of Conformity. In such a case no further thorough examination is required until the next periodic thorough examination under regulation 9 or until the next thorough examination required by the scheme of examination.

315 Used equipment which is supplied with a current report of thorough examination that found the equipment to be safe to use does not require a further thorough examination before first use at the new premises. However, if equipment has to be 'installed' then the requirements of regulation 9(2) should be considered.

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316 A thorough examination is required after substantial or significant modification or repair.

Regulation 9(2) — installation and reconfiguration

317 You should ensure that where lifting equipment is installed in a new location or reconfigured, it is thoroughly examined by a competent person to ensure that it has the adequate strength and stability for its intended use.

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318 When the integrity of the lifting equipment is dependent on its installation, it should normally be thoroughly examined each time it is reinstalled. The complexity of the installation requirements will largely determine the extent of the thorough examination required and should be based on the findings of a risk assessment.