



Even Under Pressure, Safety Must Come First



In spite of all our advance planning the nature of work means that sometimes everything does not go as planned – unforeseen issues arise that may slow down or interrupt our schedules and plans.

How we react in these situations has a major bearing on our safety and that of those around us!

Ideally we assess risks, develop plans and brief all those involved prior to starting the works and finally, the work is accomplished just as we plan.

Often times something happens–time is lost, the plan changes, some risks are not assessed, shortcuts are taken and then an accident happens–further delaying the work.

*It's possible to
achieve almost
anything as long as
you are not worried
about who gets the
credit.*

The following incident description illustrates what can happen when conditions change and the risks aren't recognized and managed.

“A monopole was due to be delivered and erected on a site on a farm. A crane was booked for 8 a.m. and a rigging team was on site to offload, rig and erect the monopole. A safety brief was held, crane certifications, riggers training & equipment checked. Everything was in place for a safe and efficient job!

Actually the monopole supplier had forgotten to book the transport so a truck on its way back from an earlier delivery was rushed back to the yard and loaded up. The truck did not arrive at site until 3:30 p.m. as the driver took some time to find the site (he had no opportunity to plan his route) by which time the crane had only half an hour rental time remaining before premium rates.



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The site supervisor understandably wanted the truck offloaded ASAP! The truck driver was tired and stressed. The late delivery was not his fault - but he had to face the team who had been waiting all day.

Taking the first corner in the farmyard he misjudged the 10 feet of monopole overhanging on his trailer and demolished a stack of potato store boxes across the back of the trailer and the farmyard.

Fortunately no one was nearby or else they could have been seriously hurt. There was then further delay whilst the boxes were removed from around the truck so it could proceed. Offloading was completed without incident but the crane and rigging team were required the following day to rig and erect the monopole.

The lesson here was that pressure on the driver from the supplier and site only had negative impacts – the driver was late because he wasn't able to plan the route and he created further risk and delay due to an error under time pressure.

There were several missed opportunities to correct the situation –

- The supplier could have given a realistic revised delivery time and an alternative plan (e.g. delivery next morning) could have been arranged.
- The driver could have been put in touch with the team at site so they could have provided directions and met him at the gate.
- Rather than rushing the driver the supervisor could have offered him more assistance in transiting through the farm or suggested he walked the route first.

We all know the right things to do but when the pressure is on we are all liable to rush and make mistakes – which will usually make the situation much worse. The old maxim 'Act in haste, regret at leisure' is very true.

When things aren't going as planned, that is exactly the time we need to slow down, rethink the situation and remind everyone to keep their safety focus.

