

VESSEL - TERMINAL GANTRY CRANE SAFETY LETTER

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Re: Vessel / Terminal Gantry Crane Safety

To minimize the risk of a vessel allision with a terminal gantry crane, the **LALB Harbor Safety Committee** recommends that all terminal operators with gantry cranes adopt the following Best Practices:

- 1) ***Prior to a vessel's arrival or departure from a berth, gantry cranes must be positioned close together, near the amidships section of the vessel (avoiding the vessel's bow and stern flair).***
- 2) ***Idle gantry crane booms must be topped up over empty berths. If a boom cannot be topped up, the appropriate pilot station should be notified.***
- 3) ***Gantry cranes must not be moved when a vessel is berthing. Moving a crane disorients and distracts the docking pilot.***
- 4) ***No personnel are to be allowed aloft on a gantry crane during berthing or unberthing operations.***

Anytime a ship is maneuvered near a berth with gantry cranes, a risk of allision exists. If a ship contacts a dock at any attitude other than flat and parallel, portions of the vessel can extend over the dock. Should a gantry crane happen to be in the overshadow area, an allision resulting in significant loss is likely. The best way to minimize this risk is to **leave gantry cranes in identified "safe areas" on the craneways**. These safe areas will vary from terminal to terminal, but will most often be the craneway areas adjacent to the ship's flatbody between the spring line bollards.

Gantry cranes boomed down over empty berths risk contact with berthing or passing ships. Modern container vessels are generally too tall to pass safely underneath a lowered gantry boom. Also, new generation gantry booms extend more than 200 feet beyond the dock

face, which in many cases is well into the federal navigation channel. **Idle gantry crane booms must be topped up over empty berths.** If operations require a boom down over an empty berth, the appropriate pilot station should be notified of the likely duration and subsequent notification should be made when the boom is raised.

Gantry crane booms should not be moved down the craneway while a ship is berthing. First, any crane movement causes a loss of situational awareness regarding the ship's motion relative to the berth. Second, the crane's audible motion alarms interfere with pilot/tugboat communications. Either can cause the pilot to momentarily lose control of the vessel during the critical part of the mooring. If cranes must be moved to clear bollards for the linemen or for any other reason, they should not be moved during vessel approach until after the ship is against the dock fenders.

Lastly, personnel should not go aloft on gantry cranes during mooring operations. Additionally, anytime personnel are aloft on gantry cranes that are boomed down over an empty berth, they must appreciate and evaluate the risks posed by passing vessels.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and your help in making the harbor a safer place for us all.

Respectfully,

LA/LB Harbor Safety Committee

Capt. John Z. Strong
Chairman