

## **NearGuard system from Konecranes wins Design 4 Safety technology award at IMHX 2010**

The NearGuard system developed by Konecranes was awarded the Technology award at this year's IMHX Design 4 Safety Awards in Birmingham. The award was accepted by Cooper SH, the UK's leading provider of Konecranes port and terminal equipment. The panel of judges consisted of independent industry specialists and health and safety practitioners from prominent UK companies.

NearGuard brings a powerful new dimension to lift truck operational safety that can cover employees, payload and infrastructure in general – it depends on each customer's particular requirements for the system.

### **A result of listening to the customer**

Konecranes has been placing a strong R&D emphasis on safety for many years. The impetus for developing NearGuard came from a customer asking for a system that would protect its drivers and operation when its Konecranes forklift trucks travelled under a belt conveyor – which happened many times a day. In answer, Konecranes provided a system that alerts the company's fork lift truck drivers when they are in danger of colliding with the overhead belt conveyor.

In the cab, an alarm display flashes and an audio alarm activates when the forklift is driven towards the conveyor with the forks raised above the freelif height of 1,600 mm. Detection is based on a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technique: a directional RFID transceiver on the fork lift truck recognizes the active RFID tag that is mounted on the conveyor. This is just one example of how the NearGuard system can be used. It is very flexible.

The Konecranes NearGuard System was launched in early 2010 and is available for use with all Konecranes Fork Lift Trucks, Container Lift Trucks and Reach Stackers. NearGuard can also be retro-fitted to any Konecranes lift truck.

### **How NearGuard works**

NearGuard consists of a minimum of two sensors that are mounted on the lift truck, one at each end of the truck, and RFID tags. The tags can be attached to a wide range of customer-defined subjects including work clothing worn by employees, other items of mobile operating equipment, or stationary obstacles. Once a tag is located, NearGuard activates a radar-like screen that gives drivers a clear visual indication of the direction and proximity of any RFID tag within range of the machine. The system engages at a range of 50 meters.

### **What impressed the judges**

At IMHX 2010, the Design 4 Safety judges were impressed by how RFID technology is used in the NearGuard system to track the location of personnel and believe this is a trend for the future. They commented that the system is an excellent example of how technology can form part of best practice to ensure that moving machinery and personnel always maintain a minimum safe distance.

### **Fewer deaths and injuries**

Investment in technology has increased over the last few years and has helped to reduce the number of deaths caused by moving vehicles. Statistics from the IMHX Health & Safety Executive show a 34 per cent reduction in 2010 compared to the same period in 2009. There is every reason to believe that the Konecranes NearGuard System will help to effect a further reduction in 2011.

### **Further information:**

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