



OH&S Bulletin

Beware of the copy cat

A tower crane manufacturer tested imitation mast sections and found dangerous shortfalls in structural safety, Liebherr tower crane expert Christoph Schneider presented the findings of the manufacturer's investigations into components manufactured to resemble original Liebherr parts, at Cranes Today, a Crane Safety Conference in London in June.

He said that the look of some of these products was deceptively good. "In some cases we couldn't tell on the outside that the unit was a copy, or that there were any problems with it," Schneider, Liebherr Biberach head of project management told the conference. "They looked good. The exterior of the welds looked fine in most cases. Mainly it is only when you get inside that you see the problems."

Schneider's presentation came after Liebherr-Werk Biberach issued a warning about the safety of copycat components.

"Our investigations have shown that these counterfeits, among other things, possess greatly reduced tensile strength, display much lower impact toughness and have inadequate weld joints," according to the Technical Information TI 684/2007, dated 16 April 2007.

In particular, tower crane section materials did not measure up to Liebherr static strength requirements, even at room temperature. The picture is even worse at cold temperatures.