

Rigger interview questions

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What to expect

Rigger interviews focus on safety, load judgement, communication and licensing. You will likely be asked to explain how you plan a lift, what you do when something changes, and how you work with crane operators and site crews.

- **Licensing and process:** Questions about your High Risk Work Licence class, tickets and the steps you follow before a lift.
- **Technical lifting:** Questions on load charts, sling angles, hitches and equipment selection.
- **Safety and hazard control:** Questions about pre-start checks, exclusion zones, tagging defective gear and stop-work authority.
- **Scenario judgement:** Questions that put you on a site with a changing or unsafe situation and ask what you do next.
- **Communication and teamwork:** Questions about directing crane operators, radio protocol and working with other trades.
- **Behavioural:** Questions that ask for a real example of how you handled pressure, conflict or a near miss.

A typical process starts with a phone or online screen with a recruiter or supervisor. If that goes well, you attend a site or office interview with a supervisor and safety lead. Some employers ask you to walk through a lift plan or complete a practical check with slings, shackles and a load chart. You may also need to show your licence and complete a site induction.

1. What High Risk Work Licence classes do you hold, and what are your responsibilities under them?

Why they ask

This confirms you can legally perform the rigging work and understand the limits of your licence.

How to structure your answer

Licensing and process: state the class, then explain the work it covers and the checks you must complete before using it on site.

Example answer

"I hold a current High Risk Work Licence for basic rigging, and I have worked under that class on construction and industrial sites. That covers slinging loads, directing crane operators and erecting structural steel within the limits of the licence. I know I cannot perform intermediate or advanced rigging work unless I hold that class, so I check the lift plan and speak up if a job falls outside my ticket. I also keep my licence card on me, complete site inductions and follow the state regulator's requirements for renewal and record keeping."

2. Can you walk me through how you plan a lift from the load chart to the hook?

Why they ask

It shows your technical process and whether you can explain it clearly to a supervisor or safety lead.

How to structure your answer

Technical walk-through: confirm the load, check the chart, select gear, calculate angles, brief the crew, then direct the lift.

Example answer

"First I confirm the weight and centre of gravity of the load, because an estimate is not good enough. I check the crane load chart for the radius and boom configuration, then select slings and shackles with a safe working load that covers the lift. I work out the sling angle so the tension on each leg stays within the gear rating. I brief the crane operator and the crew on the lift path, exclusion zone and signals. Once everyone is clear, I connect the load, check the hitch and tag lines, then direct the lift. If anything changes, I stop and replan before the load leaves the ground."

3. Tell me about a time you stopped a lift because something did not look right.

Why they ask

Safety interviews look for stop-work judgement and whether you can explain it without blaming others.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural STAR: situation, task, action, result. Keep the focus on what you noticed and what you did.

Example answer

"I was rigging precast panels on a site where the wind picked up during the morning. The panel was already slung and the crane was about to lift. I noticed the load starting to swing and the tag line was not controlling it. I signalled the operator to hold, then told the supervisor that the lift was outside the safe wind limit in the lift plan. We lowered the panel back to the stack and waited for the wind to drop. The result was no damage and no injury, and the supervisor used the delay to brief the crew on wind limits for the rest of the day."

4. You arrive on site and the lifting gear you were expecting is damaged or missing. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your judgement under pressure and whether you can adapt without cutting corners.

How to structure your answer

Scenario judgement: assess the gear, isolate it, report it, find a safe alternative or stop the job.

Example answer

"I would not use damaged gear, and I would not borrow gear without checking its rating and inspection tag. First I would isolate the damaged item and tag it out so no one else picks it up. Then I would tell the supervisor and the crane operator that the lift is on hold. I would check whether there is equivalent gear on site with a current inspection and the right safe working load. If there is not, I would organise a replacement or reschedule the lift. The priority is keeping the crew safe and not rushing a lift with gear that is not fit for purpose."

5. How do you direct a crane operator when you cannot see each other and radio reception is poor?

Why they ask

Communication failures cause serious lifting incidents, so interviewers want a clear protocol.

How to structure your answer

Communication protocol: agree signals, establish relay, confirm every message, stop if unsure.

Example answer

"Before the lift, I agree on hand signals and radio channels with the operator. If we cannot see each other, I use a relay person who can see both of us, or I move to a position with line of sight. Every radio message gets a repeat back so I know the operator heard it. If reception breaks up or a message is unclear, I signal stop and we reset. I never guess. If we cannot establish clear communication, the lift does not proceed."

6. Describe a time you worked with a crew under time pressure. How did you keep the lift safe?

Why they ask

It shows you can manage production pressure without sacrificing safety.

How to structure your answer

Behavioural STAR: situation, task, action, result. Emphasise the specific safety checks you kept in place.

Example answer

"We were erecting structural steel to close in a building before forecast rain. The crew wanted to push through, but the lift plan still had to be followed. I kept the pre-lift checks in place, confirmed the load chart for each pick and made sure the exclusion zone was clear before every lift. When one load was too close to the radius limit, I held the lift and asked the operator to reposition the crane. We lost a few minutes but avoided an overload. We finished the steel that day, and the supervisor used the same pre-lift routine on the next shift."