INSPECTION OF PRECAST PANELS/ELEMENTS PRIOR TO UNLOADING & INSTALLING ON SITE

Precast panels and elements are sometimes delivered to site in a faulty condition.

The newly released Australian Standard for precast concrete panels and elements, AS3850, requires element (ie. Panel) assessment prior to lifting on site.

Prior to lifting, all elements/panels need to be checked for any defects which may affect their structural integrity, especially:

a) Misalignment of lifting inserts.

b) Loss or incorrect orientation of lifting inserts.

c) Poor compaction of concrete around inserts.

d) Inadequate concrete strength

e) Cracks in the element passing through or close to lifting inserts.¹

Where any of these defects are found, authority to proceed with the lift and installation must be made by a competent person (ie. engineer), who must provide a written authority to proceed.

Erection crews are often put under pressure from builders to lift questionable panels/elements. If you (panel crews) are in any doubt and are not satisfied that the panel is safe to lift – Don’t! Ask for a full engineering assessment and notify your CFMEU Rep immediately!

¹ AS3850 part 2 at clause 4.4.4

The erection design engineer may redesign the lift using an alternative to the damaged cast in lifter, such as this one, but it must be amended on the shop drawings and authorised by the erection design engineer.