

From the JLC Forums

Lifting a 600-Pound Beam

Veteran contributors to *JLC's* Rough Framing Expert Forum advise a new member about his plans to lift a heavy beam into place.

We need to lift a glulam beam. It will rest 20 feet above the floor and will be 26 feet long. It's 5 1/2" wide and 17" tall. Estimated weight is 600 pounds. My son and I have lifted 400-pound beams into place before using block-and-tackle and I think we can do it again. We'll have six people on this job.

I would build a frame about 3 feet above the final resting point to hang the block-and-tackle from. Should be fun. — *DonBondo, Northwest Arkansas*

I bought a duct lift, the hand-crank kind. It's one of those things I never thought I needed, now I use it damned near every week. — *Bullhart, Belmont, Ohio*

This is one situation where I prefer multiple-ply LVLs. It's easier to lift three individual 1 3/4"x18" beams than one single 5 1/2"x18". Especially when it's 20 feet up and 26 feet long. — *Kpatrix, Houston*

I rent a boom truck for about 20 minutes to put up sticks like that. No way I even want to touch a 600-pound beam. There are three guys here with booms and they are quite affordable — it costs \$75-\$100 for the average drop-by-and-set-a-ridge-beam deal, and two of us can do it. Setting up scaffolding and all of that costs more (at least for me), and with a hoist you still have to muscle the thing onto its posts and risk being under it. I know I sound lazy, but I'd rather sip on my latte while the operator throws straps on the thing and picks it. — *David Meiland, San Juan Island, Wash.*

I vote for the boom truck also. Seriously bad things can happen, real fast. I've set many, many large beams with muscle, lifts, cranes, and boom trucks, and I've seen two come down really hard. Both times it was literally inches from "lights out" for somebody. Permanently. — *Tom, San Diego*

Depending on who's around, I've also used an excavator. The bigger ones have astounding reach. A good operator with someone competent on the spring line could have that set in just a few minutes. — *Lavrans, Seattle*

Another crane or boom truck vote. Depending on what kind of job you're doing, get some use out of the crane while it's there — like moving a pile of plywood. — *FramerT, Richmond, Va.*

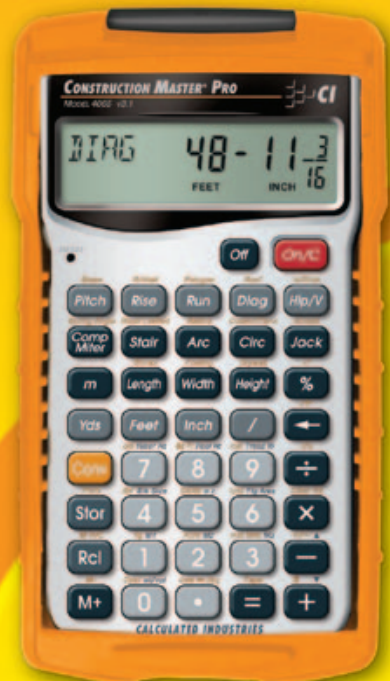
I agree with kpatrx, use LVLs. It's a lot easier to get one ply at a time up there.

Or rent some Vermettes. They are beam lifts that I borrow from a local union outfit for lifting beams. I have to buy their ironworkers a case of suds to get them out of the parking lot. — *Stretch, Battle Creek, Mich.*

Before I got my material handler, used to use wall jacks. Use pump-jack arms to hold the top in place. — *Allen Colburn, Pascoag, R.I.*

I just finished a project with *two* triple-ply 16" LVLs 24 feet long set 3 feet off-center of the ridge to hold up the roof. It's amazing how large a beam is sometimes called for. We used a truck crane to set them in place before we framed the roof. Total cost \$100. Can't beat it. — *BigLou80, Western Massachusetts*

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