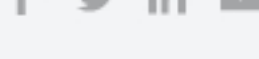


# OSHA Moves to Finalize Changes to Crane Operator Certification

JUNE 11, 2018 BY **JOBSITE EDITORIAL STAFF**



OSHA's long-awaited proposed rule to clarify crane operator requirements comes nearly eight years after the agency's attempts at certification began with the **Cranes and Derricks in Construction Standard**. The rule mandated that crane operators become certified for both the type of crane used and the lifting capacity. Some stakeholders expressed concerns that the 2010 rule's definition of "certification" didn't mean an operator had the appropriate skills.

The proposed rule seeks to drop the capacity requirement that never went into effect. The agency stated that the new regulation would expand the type of certification programs for crane operators.

Graham Brent, the CEO of the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators, has watched OSHA's rulemaking closely for twenty years. He is pleased that the idea operators are "qualified" simply because they are certified has been debunked.

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Previously, the rules were “completely silent on the experience of the operator, and we (as a certifying organization) have no idea whether the operators have thirty years of experience or one year—it was qualitatively and quantitatively impossible for certification to assess that,” said Brent.

The proposed rules, published in the May 21, 2018, Federal Register, state that “employers must continue to provide operators with comprehensive training, which supplements the kind of training needed to obtain certification.”

OSHA estimates that the industry-wide cost of compliance with the new rules would be \$1,583,169 for: operator competency evaluations, documenting those evaluations, and the cost of additional training. However, it also estimates sizeable one-time cost savings, with the drop in the requirement that crane operators be certified by capacity, of \$25,560,840.

Crane operators with existing certification would not need additional certification when moved to operating cranes with differing capacities; on the other hand, the proposed rules state “employers who currently provide insufficient training would incur new costs to comply.”

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Most certification tests cost less than \$200. The requirements for certification and ongoing evaluation are meant to work hand-in-hand to add a layer of safety. The rules state:

“Without the evaluation requirement there would be no distinction between the competency required to operate the smallest, simplest mobile crane and the largest, most complex mobile crane. It is our intent with this proposal to avoid a repeat of a tragedy like the Deep South collapse, in which an operator was assigned to a crane of a type for which he was certified, but the controls and operations were substantially different from those with which he was familiar.”

The rules describe a pre-qualification/certification training period in this way:

“This provision would allow experienced and certified operators to become accustomed to performing new crane operations or operating somewhat different equipment while being evaluated by the employer for that purpose, or to allow a newly hired operator to run the equipment while a new employer gauges the operator's crane knowledge, operating skills, and training needs.”

Brent says that these rules accurately reflect the construction industry's input over the years. Moreover, the insurance industry, union, and non-union groups support the rules as they are now written.

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NCCCO has an impetus called **“It's Not Worth the Wait,”** urging construction companies to get their crane operators certified before November.

“This program was designed by the industry for the industry. It comes from a desire to be self-regulated, which doesn't happen very often. This was one of those occasions where we just said we've got to fix this problem now.”

The comment period for these proposals ends June 20, 2018. It is important to specify that you are commenting on docket OSHA-2007-0066 at **www.regulations.gov**. If there are no public hearings, the rules take effect November 10, 2018.

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