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OSHA[®] FactSheet

Subpart CC – Cranes and Derricks in Construction: Operator Qualification and Certification

This fact sheet explains the operator qualification and certification requirements of subpart CC – Cranes and Derricks in Construction, as specified in 29 CFR 1926.1427. State or local government licensing is effective November 8, 2010. Other certification and qualification is effective November 10, 2014.

Who needs to be certified or qualified?

Any person engaged in a construction activity who is operating a crane covered by the new cranes and derricks rule, except:

- sideboom cranes*
- derricks*
- equipment with a rated hoisting/lifting capacity of 2,000 pounds or less*

*Operators of the listed equipment must meet the criteria for minimum expertise described in the applicable section in subpart CC.

Are operators of digger derricks required to be qualified or certified?

Yes, unless the digger derrick is being used to auger holes for poles carrying electric or telecommunication lines, place or remove the poles, or handle associated materials to be installed on or removed from the poles.

What is required in the testing for certification?

Certification has two parts:

1. A written examination that includes the safe operating procedures for the particular type of equipment the applicant will be operating and

technical understanding of the subject matter criteria required in 1926.1427(j).

2. A practical exam showing the applicant has the skills needed to safely operate the equipment, including, among other skills, the ability to properly use load chart information and recognize items required in the shift inspection.

Does an operator need more than one certification?

With respect to certification from an accredited testing organization, an operator must be certified for the *type* and *capacity* of crane he or she is going to operate. Each accredited testing organization develops its own categories for crane type and capacity.

How is an operator certified or qualified?

There are 4 ways that an equipment operator can be qualified or certified and meet OSHA requirements.

1. A certificate from an accredited crane operator testing organization
2. Qualification from the employer through an audited employer program
3. Qualification by the US Military (only applies to employees of Department of Defense or Armed Forces and does not include private contractors)
4. *Licensing by a state or local government (if that licensing meets the minimum requirements set forth by OSHA)

*When a state or local government requires a crane operator license, the crane operator must be licensed accordingly to meet OSHA requirements.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For more complete information:



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Operator Qualification and Certification, continued.

Accredited crane operator testing organization. The testing organization must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency and test according to the criteria listed at §§ 1926.1427(j)(1) and (j)(2). This certification is portable from employer to employer. The testing organization must have its accreditation reviewed every 3 years. The certificate must note the type and capacity of equipment for which the operator is tested and certified. The certificate is valid for 5 years.

Audited employer program. An employer may provide a crane operator testing program under the oversight of an independent auditor. An accredited crane operator testing organization must certify the auditor to evaluate the administration of written and practical tests. The auditor must conduct audits of the employer's program according to nationally recognized auditing standards. Crane operator qualification under an employer program is only valid while the operator is an employee of the employer and

operating a crane for the employer. The qualification is valid up to 5 years.

U.S. Military. This qualification applies only to civilian employees of the Department of Defense or Armed Services and is not portable. This qualification does not include employees of private contractors.

Licensing by a government entity. This license is obtained from a government entity, such as a city or state that has a required certification program. When this license meets the minimum requirements of 1926.1427(e)(2) and (j), OSHA requires a crane operator to have this license when operating in the applicable city, county, or state. This license is not portable outside the boundaries of the government entity that issues the license, and is valid for a maximum of 5 years.

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