

SUBJECT: Crane Operator Certification and Proof of Certification

Purpose: This instruction establishes MNOSHA guidelines to ensure uniform enforcement of the crane operation and proof of certification statute for the construction industry.

Scope: This instruction applies Division wide.

References:

1. MN Stat. § 182.6525 Crane Operation
2. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers ASME B30.5-2004, Mobile and Locomotive Cranes.
3. 29 CFR 1926.1427, Cranes and Derricks in Construction, Operator Qualification and Certification

Cancellation: This directive supersedes MNOSHA NOTICE STD 5-0.3, dated July 30, 2007.

Background:

Minnesota Statute § 182.6525 Crane Operation, adopted May 24, 2005, states that an individual may not operate a crane with a lifting capacity of five tons or more on a construction site unless the individual has a valid crane operator certificate received from a nationally recognized and accredited certification program. No employer, and no person who is under contract to construct an improvement to land, may permit any employee, agent, or independent contractor to perform work in violation of this statute. Crane operator certifications must be renewed by an accredited certification program every five years. The certification requirements became effective July 1, 2007.

Federal OSHA adopted Subpart CC on November 10, 2010. Minnesota OSHA adopted Subpart CC on February 7, 2011. For cranes covered by the federal standard, operator certification is required. However, following several challenges to the standard, the certification date was extended three years in 2014. Minnesota OSHA adopted the crane operator certification extension on March 16, 2015. Therefore, OSHI's will follow the guidelines set forth in this instruction through November 10, 2017.

ACTION:

A. CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

An OSHI must determine if the activity being observed fits the definition of construction work, which is defined as work for construction, alteration, and/or repair, including painting and decorating

B. QUALIFYING CRANES

Prior to citing an employer for failing to meet the crane operator certification requirements, an OSHI must determine the equipment being utilized meets the following criteria.

The crane being utilized must:

1. Be a mobile crane or any variation thereof that retains the same fundamental characteristics, including but not limited to;
  - a. Commercial truck mounted crane (with or without telescoping boom);
  - b. Wheel-mounted crane (single or multiple control station, with or without telescoping boom);

- c. Crawler crane (lattice or telescoping boom);
  - d. Knuckle boom truck (with wire rope);
  - e. Mobile tower crane truck (lattice boom); and
  - f. Mobile crawler set up as tower crane (lattice boom)
2. Have the lifting capacity of five tons (10,000lbs) or more;
  3. Be on a construction site performing construction work activity;
  4. Have a wire rope over sheave configuration.

The crane certification standard does not apply to:

1. Track and automotive jacks;
2. Railway or automobile wrecking cranes;
3. Shipboard cranes;
4. Shipboard cargo equipment;
5. Well digging derricks;
6. Skip hoists;
7. Mine hoists;
8. Truck body hoists;
9. Car or barge pullers; and
10. Conveyors or excavation equipment when not used as a rotating hoist type lifting crane.

#### C. CRANE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

An OSHI must then determine whether the crane operator is certified. An individual who is operating a qualifying crane on a worksite shall provide proof of certification upon request by an investigator. The OSHI will verify that the crane operators' certification card has the following information:

1. A certification number
2. Photograph of the holder
3. Issuance and expiration date (ensure renewal within the past five years)
4. Certification designations & codes
5. Sponsoring organizations information (to ensure validity of certification)

#### D. EXEMPTIONS

Crane operator certification is not required under the following conditions:

1. A trainee or apprentice under the direct supervision of a crane operator who holds a valid crane operator certificate. Direct supervision means a certified operator will be on the same working surface, within visual sighting distance of the trainee being supervised. The certified operator will also be close enough to communicate verbally with the trainee and not have other responsibilities that could distract from the supervision of the trainee;
2. A person directly employed by a class 1 or 2 railroad who is qualified by the employing railroad as a crane operator or boom truck operator and is performing work on property owned, leased, or controlled by the employing railroad;
3. A person employed by or performing work for a public utility, rural electric cooperative, municipality, telephone company, or industrial manufacturing plant;
4. A person subject to inspection and regulation under the Mine Safety and Health Act, United States Code, title 30, sections 801 through 962;
5. A person engaged in boating, fishing, agriculture, or arboriculture;
6. A person who is a member of and performing work for a uniformed service or who is a member of and performing work for the United States Merchant Marines;
7. A person operating a crane for personal use on premises owned or leased by that person; and

8. A person operating a crane in an emergency situation.

E. CITATIONS

If the OSHI determines the employer should be cited for failure to meet the crane certification standard, a serious citation shall be issued. Some examples of citable conditions include, but are not limited to;

1. Crane operator does not carry a valid certification card;
2. Type of crane being used does not match designation shown on certification card;
3. Certification card is deemed invalid by certifying organization.

Citations will be issued according to the following severity levels;

C Invalid certification (no other operating deficiencies)

D – F Invalid certification (rate higher for striking potential, crushing potential, operating near wall or in congested areas)

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for the OSHA Management Team

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Attachments: Appendix A – Crane Operator Certification: Frequently Asked Questions

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**APPENDIX A**

**CRANE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION:  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. Q. Is a physical exam required every five years with the recertification?**

A. ASME B30.5, section 5-3.1.2(f) states operator physical examinations shall be required every three years or more frequently if supervision deems necessary. Operators carrying a medical examiner's certificate (commonly referred to as DOT health cards) are required to have a physical exam every two years, so the DOT health cards will cover the physical exam requirement.

**2. Q. What is the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) classification for large versus small cranes in terms of tons?**

A. Classifications are no longer by tons, they are now classified by the designation of the crane. For example: TSS — small telescopic boom cranes (fixed cab); and TLL — large telescopic boom cranes (swing cab).

**3. Q. What are the crane classifications for operators certified under the old name?**

A. TSS: small telescopic, less than 17.5 tons capacity; and TLL: large telescopic, more than 17.5 tons capacity. Retraining is not necessary, unless the operator is seeking certification on a different category of crane or the old certification is expiring.

**4. Q. Is there a Web site to confirm whether a person is crane-certified? (Referencing forged or counterfeit cards.)**

A. Yes, you can use the contact information on the back of the certification card for verification or visit [www.nccco.org](http://www.nccco.org) if the certification card was issued by NCCCO.

**5. Q. What does direct supervision mean?**

A. Direct supervision means a certified operator will be on the same working surface, within visual sighting distance of the trainee being supervised. The certified operator will also be close enough to communicate verbally with the trainee and not have other responsibilities that could distract from the supervision of the trainee.

**6. Q. If you own and operate a crane yourself, do you need to be certified?**

A. Yes, if as the owner of the crane you are under contract to perform crane activity that fits the definition of construction work (work for construction, alteration, and/or repair, including painting decorating and improvement to land). Being an Independent Contractor can be a violation to the statute.  
No, as long as the crane is for personal use on premises owned or leased by that person.

**7. Q. If a construction company goes into a general industry location for a remodel/retrofit, does the construction company's crane operator need to be certified?**

A. Yes, if the operator works with a qualifying crane.

**8. Q. Is certification required for boom-truck operators when using a boom with a lifting capacity of less than five tons?**

A. No, the current regulations affect cranes with lifting capacities of five tons or greater.

**9. Q. Do tower-crane operators need certification or have different certifications?**

A. Operators who use tower cranes that fall under ASME B30.5 are required to have certification. Mobile lattice boom-truck tower cranes and crawlers set up as tower cranes fall under ASME B30.5. The current standard does not apply to construction tower cranes that fall under ASME B 30.3.

**10. Q. If a crane is used outside of the scope of work (in terms of electrical contractor, public utility, etc.), such as moving materials for other trades, are the operators required to be certified?**

A. Yes.

**11. Q. In Minnesota, where is crane-operator training available?**

A. There are crane-operator training courses available at multiple Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) locations and through various industry associations. To be certified, operators must contact one of the two certifying bodies.

**12. Q. Do other states have similar training available?**

A. Yes, there are many crane-operator training courses offered throughout the country.

**13. Q. Does an operator need to be certified to move a crane but not to do work?**

A. Yes, if it is a qualifying crane being operated on a construction site.

**14. Q. What are the citation costs and will investigators shut sites down for missing certifications?**

A. Citations will be issued as serious violations and investigators will not be shutting down sites for missing certifications.

**15. Q. Will investigators initiate inspections based on cranes that are in operation, just to check for certifications— as they do for excavations?**

A. No, investigators will continue to conduct programmed inspections in the same manner. Excavations are covered under a national emphasis program, which mandates inspections.

**16. Q. Are cranes that are operated by electric utilities exempt?**

A. Yes.

**17. Q. Does an operator need certification if they are using a crane to set up or take down a batch plant, to provide concrete or asphalt to a construction site?**

A. Yes, batch plants are used to manufacture ready-mixed concrete or bituminous hot-mix asphalt during the construction of roads, bridges, retaining walls or other large structures in remote areas. Since these locations are construction sites, the current standard will apply.

**18. Q. The statute states that people employed by a municipality are exempt. Does this apply to county employees?**

A. Yes.

**19. Q. When are employees of public utilities, rural electric cooperatives, municipalities, telephone companies and industrial manufacturing plants *not* exempt from the current standard?**

A. Employees of public utilities, rural electric cooperatives, municipalities, telephone companies and industrial manufacturing plants are currently exempt.

**20. Q. Will electrical contractors performing upgrades to an existing power line, with the use of a crane, be required to have certification?**

A. No.

**21. Q. Will the NCCCO require applicants to have 1,000 hours of crane-operating experience before applying for the certification exam?**

A. No, the NCCCO has changed its policy. When applicants apply for their initial certification, they are not required to have 1,000 hours of crane-operating experience. Applicants applying for recertification are required to have 1,000 hours of industry experience to take the written test only. Recertification applicants that do not have 1,000 hours of industry experience will be required to take both a written and a practical exam.

**22. Q. Will rough terrain forklifts be included in the new standard?**

A. No, only equipment covered by ANSI/ASME B30.5-2004 will be included in the current standard.

**23. Q. The crane-operator statute states a person engaged in boating, fishing, agriculture or arboriculture is exempt from certification requirements. How does OSHA define arboriculture?**

A. Arboriculture is defined as the planting and care of woody plants, especially trees.

**24. Q. Will pump hoist operators be required to have certification?**

A. Pump hoists and pump-repair hoists are not installed on overhead traveling cranes such as mobile and locomotive cranes. Therefore, pump hoists and pump-repair hoist operators will not be required to have certification.

**25. Q. How does Minnesota OSHA enforce Minnesota Statutes §182.6525?**

A. Research has shown the adoption of Minnesota Statutes §182.6525 did not reveal any history, oral or written, that would support the contention that the exception given in subdivision 2, item (3), is limited to "maintenance" work. Therefore, the statute has been enforced within the requirements of the language as it is written.

People involved in the passage of this legislation fully understand operators on the same construction site may be held to different standards.

**26. Q. What organizations are nationally recognized and accredited to issue crane operator certifications?**

A. As of July 1, 2007 the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators and the Southern California Crane and Hoisting Certification Program are the only two nationally recognized and accredited organizations available.