

CRANE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION—SECTION 5006.1

Introduction

Effective June 1, 2005, section 5006.1 requires operators of mobile and tower cranes to be certified by an accredited certifying agency. Section 5006.1 builds on the requirement of section 5006, which has been in place since 1986, that all crane operators to be trained. Section 5006.1 was adopted on July 3, 2003, after more than 3 years of advisory committees and public hearings. The advisory committee represented a broad-based group of crane owners, labor representatives, contractors, associations, and other interested parties.

Section 5006.1 requires a physical examination, a substance abuse test, a written examination, and a hands-on examination before certification is granted to a crane operator. The National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) was selected by the advisory committee to act as the accrediting agency for crane operator certifiers because of its experience with the certification process in connection with a variety of other entities and the desire to maintain a high standard for crane operator certification. The NCCA is an independent third party organization that has established rules and procedures for the development and administration of examinations by certifying entities.

Question 1: What organizations have been approved by NCCA to certify operators in California?

Answer: The NCCA has approved the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) and Operating Engineers, Local #12 to certify crane operators in California. Some additional entities may have started the application process but have not submitted their complete programs for approval. Information on NCCCO written and practical examinations is found at the following web site: www.nccco.org

Question 2: What crane operators require certification and when is the effective date?

Answer: Mobile and tower crane operators shall be certified by June 1, 2005. The Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board elected not to extend the effective date at its meeting held on February 17, 2005.

Question 3: Are all crane operators required to be certified?

Answer: Operation of mobile cranes that have a maximum rated capacity of less than 15,000 pounds **or** mobile cranes that have a boom length less than 25 feet does not require certification. However, it does require training pursuant to section 5006.

Question 4: Will grandfathering of crane operators, based on experience, no incident rates, and/or and training be allowed?

Answer: There are no provisions written into this regulation to allow “grandfathering” per se. Mobile and tower crane operators covered by section 5006.1 will be required to be tested and certified prior to

June 1, 2005. However, the standard does allow operators with 1000 hours of documented crane operating time not to have to take the practical examination for **recertification**.

Question 5: Are operators of electric line trucks exempt from this regulation when moving materials and setting transformers, line poles, wire, etc.?

Answer: Yes. Title 8 CCR Section 2700, has a definition of an "Electric Line Truck". Operators of equipment meeting the definition "Electric Line Truck" equipment will be exempt when performing electric power line construction and maintenance work.

Question 6: What are the "types" of cranes for which Cal/OSHA will require a certified operator after June 1, 2005?

Answer: Title 8 CCR, Section 5006.1 applies to two basic types of cranes: Mobile Cranes and Tower Cranes. Mobile Crane type designation will include truck-mounted cranes, crawler cranes, locomotive cranes, wheel-mounted cranes and articulating boom cranes. The Tower Crane type designation will include construction type tower cranes such as hammerhead tower cranes, fixed tower cranes, climber tower cranes, luffing boom tower cranes, self-erector tower cranes and mobile tower cranes.

Question 7: Do crane operators have to be certified on the exact model of crane that they operate?

Answer: No. Operators need to be tested on the type of mobile or tower crane that they will operate. It is understood that there will not be a specific written test for every model of crane. The examiner should select a written test on a similar type of crane to qualify the applicant. The employer can also have the proficiency or practical examination conducted on the crane that the applicant operates.

Question 8: Are whirley, portal, bridge or gantry cranes that move on tracks considered to be mobile cranes requiring operator certification?

Answer: No. Whirley, portal, bridge and gantry type cranes will not be included because they are not considered mobile cranes.

Question 9: Do operators of tower cranes with a rated capacity of less than 15,000 lbs. require certification?

Answer: Yes. There is no capacity exemption for tower crane operators in the standard. All tower crane operators are required to be certified

Question 10: Are crane mechanics, inspectors, sales representatives or transport drivers required to be certified?

Answer: No. If a crane is not being used in lifting service the operator would not be required to be certified. Examples: If a mechanic installs new brakes or a new wire rope on the crane or is testing the crane to ascertain that the repairs are correct by operating the crane for a short time, that would not

be considered as being used in lifting service. The transport driver unloading a crane from his transport truck would not be considered a crane lifting service operation.

Question 11: "Does the crane certification requirement apply to offshore cranes?"

Answer: Federal OSHA maintains jurisdiction over cranes that are mounted on barges or ships that are in "navigable" waters in and around the coast of California. A Federal DOL certification is required for those cranes. For those cranes used on oil platforms, California maintains jurisdiction of the platforms in California territorial waters and requires those cranes to have California certifications. The operator qualifications would be covered by sections 5006 and 5006.1.

Question 12: Does a written administrative procedure that limits crane operators to boom extensions no greater than 25 feet and/or administratively limits the crane operator to a maximum load to less than 15,000 pounds, meet the Cal/OSHA enforcement policy for applying the exemption?

Answer: No. California regulations allow for a Certified Agent (manufacturer's representative or a registered engineer, knowledgeable in the construction and use of the equipment), to reduce the load rated capacity of the crane. Revised load charts, manuals and crane recertification are required by section 5027.

Question 13: How is boom length determined?

Answer: Boom is defined as: A member section of a crane or derrick, the lower end of which is affixed to a mast, base, carriage, or support, and the upper end supports a hook or other end attachment. The length of the boom shall be taken as the straight-line distance between the axis of the foot pin and the axis of the end sheave pin. The boom length does not include boom attachments. The boom length of an articulating boom shall be the length of the extended boom.

Question 15: Are the operators of log loaders required to be certified?

Answer: No. Log loaders that are attachments to an excavator type machine are not classified as cranes and the operators are not required to be certified.

Question 16: When draglines or excavators used for excavating aggregate material is the operator required to be certified by section 5006.1?

Answer: No. The operator of a dragline used exclusively for excavating is not required to be certified. If the dragline is used in lifting service as a crane the operator and crane need to be certified.