



ARTICULATING CRANE OPERATOR CERTIFICATION

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Why did NCCCO develop the new Articulating Crane Operator (ACO) certification program?

As other National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) crane operator certification programs—mobile crane, tower crane, and overhead crane—have gained momentum and acceptance, the need for a distinct certification program addressing articulating cranes and their unique applications has become apparent. Articulating cranes require a different knowledge and skill set to operate, so NCCCO worked with key articulating crane manufacturers, users, and industry experts to develop this program. The resulting ACO certification program promises to bring the same safety, insurance, and risk reduction benefits that NCCCO's other certification programs have demonstrably delivered since 1995.

How does operator certification improve safety in crane operation?

Crane operator certification has been shown to save lives through reduced accidents. Ongoing studies in locations where operator training and certification are required—some going back 30 years—show an 80 percent decrease in the crane-related death rate and a 50 percent reduction in crane and rigging accidents.

Will everyone have to be certified?

To do the jobs they are assigned, equipment operators must be appropriately qualified. NCCCO certification is a federally recognized means of ensuring personnel are qualified, which is why so many employers, federal agencies, states, labor unions, industry organizations, and insurance firms have come to recognize or require NCCCO certification. Also, OSHA's Proposed Federal Rule (C-DAC) that will revise construction crane standards contains specific qualification requirements for articulating crane operators. NCCCO's ACO certification program meets and/or exceeds these requirements.

Which types of tests are there?

NCCCO's Articulating Crane Task Force designed a testing program consisting of three multiple-choice written examinations, covering Articulating Boom Loaders, Articulating Boom Cranes, and Articulating Boom Cranes with Winch Attachment. Separate practical examinations for Articulating Boom Cranes and Articulating Boom Loaders have also been developed. Candidates will choose one written exam and one or both practical exams, depending on the certifications they seek. Certifications are valid for five years, after which operators must take a recertification exam.

Who is on the Articulating Crane Task Force?

The Articulating Crane Council of North America (ACCNA), an affiliate division of the National Truck Equipment Association, and NCCCO cooperatively developed the ACO certification program for operators of truck-mounted articulating boom cranes. In addition to ACCNA and NCCCO personnel, the Task Force is made up of representatives of all facets of the industries that use articulated cranes in construction as well as material delivery. The Task Force members—all subject matter experts (SMEs) active in their fields—have met approximately every six weeks since the Task Force was established in December 2008 to develop and refine the program.

How was the new program developed?

The new program has drawn on three major resources: industry support, subject matter expertise, and psychometric guidance. All elements of the new program were developed according to the strict psychometric standards that are a hallmark of NCCCO's other certification programs. This multi-faceted approach ensures that the tests are (and remain) fair, valid, reliable, and legally defensible.

Who decided what is tested on the exams?

All the knowledge areas in the four content domains were identified by the Task Force as being critical to the tasks involved in safely operating articulating cranes. The SMEs identified the necessary knowledge and skills for each activity and then grouped them into four content areas.

What do the tests cover?

The four content domains covered by the tests are: (1) Site and Setup of Articulating Cranes, (2) Operation, (3) Technical Knowledge, and (4) Using Manufacturers' Load Charts.

Who provided test development expertise?

Task Force experts were guided by psychometric consultants from International Assessment Institute, the testing services company that has provided exam development and administration services to NCCCO since 1999. As with its existing programs, NCCCO conducted a professional job task analysis to serve as the foundation for exam development.

Will training be required?

Because of the need to provide a completely independent, third-party certification process, NCCCO does not offer training. However, NCCCO promotes the use of professionally developed training and strongly encourages all candidates to enroll in suitable classes before applying to take the exams.

Will the new programs be accredited?

NCCCO is in the process of obtaining accreditation for the new ACO certification program, as it has for its other certification programs. Accreditation from a rigorous personnel certification accreditation body, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), indicates that these nationally recognized and administered programs deliver what they promise.

Who recognizes NCCCO certification programs?

NCCCO certifications have been nationally accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) since 1998 and by ANSI since 2007. The NCCCO crane operator certification programs are also the only programs to be recognized by federal OSHA as meeting OSHA and ASME (ANSI) requirements for crane operator competency. The NCCCO programs are unique in that they are: third-party; independent of training; developed and supported by industry; a joint labor/management initiative; psychometrically sound; validated through peer review; and administered on a standardized, secure, nationwide basis.

Who is the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators?

NCCCO is a non-profit industry organization formed in January 1995 to develop effective performance standards for safe crane operation to assist all segments of construction and general industry. Since NCCCO began testing in April 1996, more than 400,000 written and practical exams have been administered to over 65,000 crane operators in all 50 states. Over two-thirds of the states that have requirements for crane operators require or recognize NCCCO certification.

How do I find out more?

Full program information including candidate handbooks and applications are available from NCCCO's website at www.nccco.org. Updates are also posted online as they become available.