

Coalition for Crane Operator Safety (CCOS)

Ensuring Clear & Effective OSHA Crane Operator Certification Requirements

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Leading Construction Groups Form Coalition Calling For OSHA to Correct and Reissue Long-Awaited Crane Operator Certification Requirements

Coalition for Crane Operator Safety, which Includes Both Labor & Management Orgs., Says Lack of Effective Requirements is Jeopardizing Jobsite Safety, Hindering Construction Industry Progress, and Creating Compliance Issues; Calls for OSHA to Rescind Two Unnecessary Provisions

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 30, 2014) – Ten of the nation’s leading construction industry organizations today launched the Coalition for Crane Operator Safety (CCOS) – a group dedicated to ensuring the swift revision and finalization of the crane operator certification requirements within the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) Cranes & Derricks in Construction Standard, which has been more than two decades in the making. CCOS is working with members of Congress and the Administration to ensure that crane operator certification requirements in the Standard are amended and finalized in a way that provides the highest degree of safety for the construction industry and the public.

CCOS – whose membership includes labor, management, equipment manufacturing, insurance underwriters and accredited certification organizations – is specifically calling for OSHA to rescind the crane capacity certification requirement, as well as a provision that essentially equates employer certification with qualification.

OSHA’s final requirements, published in 2010, contained these two provisions, which the industry argues are counterproductive and a misinterpretation of the intent of OSHA’s Cranes and Derricks Advisory Committee (C-DAC) – a group of 23 construction industry leaders commissioned by OSHA to develop a consensus document that formed the basis of the rule.

"The uncertainty and delay around the new crane operator certification requirements jeopardizes the safety of construction workers and the general public," said James T. Callahan, general president of the International Union of Operating Engineers, a member of CCOS. "It’s essential that OSHA gets it right, but we believe they can revise, correct, and re-issue the new certification regulation well ahead of the November 2017 extension date."

Since all but one of the 42 sections in the 2010 Standard have been agreed upon and enacted, the industry is now waiting on OSHA to correct the two ineffectual provisions and present clear and effective certification requirements.

"Our primary issue with OSHA’s position on these matters is that it ignores the intent of C-DAC while adopting a literal interpretation of the language of the rule which, in some cases, was inserted by OSHA



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after C-DAC had completed and submitted its draft document,” said Bill Smith, executive vice president of NationsBuilders Insurance Services, Inc., CCOS member, and former C-DAC representative. “For the record, it was never the intent of C-DAC that crane operator certification should be according to the capacity of the crane, nor was it ever the intent of C-DAC to imply that crane operator certification was equal to qualification.”

Requiring certified crane operators to be retested on a higher capacity crane of the same type does not advance safety and imposes tremendous financial burdens on employers and individual crane operators. This means that an operator certified to operate a 100-ton crane would not be permitted to operate a 200-ton crane of the same type, despite wide consensus in the industry that certification based on capacity is unnecessary and burdensome.

“Adjudicating operator certification requirements based on capacity would add significant new complexity for employers and their employees without yielding any discernible improvement in safety,” said Stephen Sandherr, chief executive officer of The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), also a CCOS member. “As significant, no national safety study has found any additional safety benefits beyond certification by type, and OSHA has not analyzed the costs, benefits or other consequences of certification by capacity.”

OSHA’s new “deemed qualified” provision – the second provision included in the agency’s 2010 certification requirements that has surprised CCOS members and the construction industry at large – eliminates the employer’s duty to train and qualify operators, which has existed since the passage of the OSH Act in 1970.

“On the issue of certification equaling qualification, all organizations, companies, unions and interested parties agree that simply having certification does not automatically qualify an operator for any piece of equipment,” said Joel Dandrea, executive vice president of the Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association and member of CCOS. “Together, we are calling upon OSHA to fix and finalize the crane operator certification requirements, and we intend to work with both the Administration and Congress to make this happen.”

About the Coalition for Crane Operator Safety (CCOS)

The Coalition for Crane Operator Safety (CCOS) is a group of national labor, construction management, equipment manufacturers, insurance underwriters, and accredited certification organizations dedicated to ensuring swift and effective resolution of the long-awaited OSHA Crane Operator Certification Standard. Members include: Associated Equipment Distributors (AED), Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Union, International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), NationsBuilders Insurance Services, Inc. (NBIS), National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO), The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Operating Engineers Certification Program (OECF), and Specialized Carriers & Rigging Association (SC&RA).

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