

AN EMPLOYER'S GUIDE TO THE OSHA FINAL RULE: **CRANE OPERATOR EVALUATION**



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One of the key differences between the first Final Rule issued in 2010 and the Final Rule just published that modifies it, is the addition of a process OSHA calls Evaluation. Here we drill down into the main elements as prescribed by OSHA.

What am I required to do under OSHA's new Evaluation requirement?

The Rule states that, effective February 7, 2019, you must conduct an evaluation of each operator to ensure he/she is qualified by a demonstration of (i) the skills and knowledge necessary to operate the equipment safely, and (ii) the ability to recognize and avert risks associated with the operation.

What does OSHA mean by "skills and knowledge"?

The skills and knowledge OSHA has identified include those specific to the safety devices, operational aids, and software the crane is equipped with. Most importantly, the evaluation must take into account the size and configuration of the crane he/she plans to operate including (but not limited to) the crane's lifting capacity, boom length, any attachments (such as a luffing jib), and counterweight set-up.

What else must the Evaluation consist of?

The Evaluation must also cover the operator's ability to perform the hoisting activities required for the work he/she is assigned, including, if applicable, blind lifts, personnel hoisting, and multi-crane lifts.

Can I just not go by OSHA's standard definition of a "qualified person"?

No. The Rule is very clear on this. OSHA states that the definition of "qualified" in §1926.32 does not apply here. In other words, possession of a certificate or degree cannot, by itself, qualify an operator to operate cranes.

Who can conduct the Evaluations?

They must be conducted by someone who has the "knowledge, training, and experience necessary" to assess equipment operators.

Can I delegate these Evaluations to someone else?

The evaluator must be an employee of yours or be acting as your agent. If you do delegate the evaluations to an agent you are still responsible for ensuring they are done correctly.

How specific do the Evaluations have to be?

Once you have successfully evaluated an operator for the necessary skills and knowledge for the size and configuration of crane he/she plans to operate, you may allow that operator to operate other equipment that you can demonstrate does not require substantially different skills, knowledge, or ability to recognize and avert risk to operate.

Do I have to document the Evaluation?

Yes. The documentation must be available at the worksite and must include: the name of the operator and the evaluator; the date of the evaluation; and the make, model, and configuration of the crane used in the evaluation. The evaluator also has to sign it.

Do the evaluations I have already done count?

Yes, for operators employed prior to December 10, 2018, you may rely on your previous assessments in lieu of conducting a new evaluation of that operator's existing knowledge and skills. The documentation must note the date of the assessment and the make, model, and configuration of the crane on which it was done.

How often do I have to do these Evaluations?

Re-evaluations are required whenever you provide retraining to an operator. And you must retrain an operator whenever you believe it's necessary based on an operator's performance or an evaluation of the operator's knowledge. The re-evaluation need only focus on the area(s) which the retraining covered.

See also related documents:

Crane Operator Certification: An Employer's Guide

Crane Operator Training: An Employer's Guide

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