

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



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Most employers are likely familiar with the crane operator training requirements OSHA published in 2010. The latest Rule published in November modifies some of those. Here, NCCCO provides an overview of the essential elements.

What training does OSHA require me to do?

You must provide each operator-in-training with sufficient training, through a combination of formal and practical instruction, to ensure that the operator-in-training develops the skills, knowledge, and ability to recognize and avert risk necessary to operate the equipment safely for assigned work.

What specifically must that training include?

OSHA is pretty specific about this. It lists the knowledge and skills it has identified as critical to safe crane operation in 1926.1427 (j)(1) and (2).

Can operators-in-training operate cranes even if they are not certified?

Yes, but they are restricted in what they can do, and they must be continuously monitored.

What are some of the restrictions on what an operator-in-training can do?

OSHA has identified five (5) circumstances in which operators-in-training who are not yet certified are not allowed to operate cranes:

- (i) If any part of the crane, load line, or load (including rigging and lifting accessories), if operated up to the crane's maximum working radius in the work zone could get within 20 feet of a power line that is up to 350 kV, or within 50 feet of a power line that is over 350 kV.
- (ii) Hoisting personnel.
- (iii) Multi-crane lifts.
- (iv) Over a shaft, cofferdam, or in a tank farm.
- (v) Multiple-lift rigging operations (unless the operator's trainer determines that the operator-in-training's skills are sufficient).

Who monitors the operators-in-training?

The person who OSHA identifies as the "operator's trainer" is responsible for continuously monitoring the operator-in-training. He or she must be an employee or agent of the operator-in-training's employer, and must have the knowledge, training, and experience necessary to direct the operator-in-training on the equipment in use.

Can the person monitoring the operator-in-training do other things while she or he is monitoring?

OSHA states that, while monitoring the operator-in-training, the operator's trainer must perform no task that detracts from the trainer's ability to monitor the operator-in-training. Moreover, the operator's trainer and the operator-in-training must be in direct line of sight of each other, and they must be able to communicate verbally or by hand signals. For tower cranes, direct line of sight is not required.

What does OSHA mean by “continuously” monitored?

OSHA says that the operator-in-training must be monitored by the operator’s trainer at all times. Short breaks are permitted, however, so long as (i) the break is no longer than 15 minutes and (ii) there is no more than one break per hour. Immediately prior to the break the operator’s trainer must inform the operator-in-training of the specific tasks that he/she is to perform and the limitations to which he/she must adhere during the operator trainer’s break. Of course, those tasks must be within the operator-in-training’s abilities.

Do I have to retrain?

Absolutely. You must provide retraining in relevant topics for each operator when, based on the performance of the operator, or an evaluation of the operator’s knowledge, there is an indication that retraining is necessary.

See also related documents:

Crane Operator Evaluation: An Employer’s Guide

Crane Operator Certification: An Employer’s Guide

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