

New Crane-Operator Regulations — An Overview

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Legislation was enacted in Minnesota May 24, 2005, that requires the certification and regulation of crane operators. This is an overview of the new regulation, which takes effect July 1, 2007. According to the new law, no individual may operate a crane, with the lifting capacity of five tons or more, on a construction site unless that person has a valid crane-operator certificate. The certificate must be issued by a nationally recognized and accredited certification program.

The new regulation applies to all wire rope-over-sheave mobile cranes and mobile tower cranes. The standard does not apply to track and automotive jacks, railway or automobile wrecking cranes, shipboard cranes, shipboard cargo handling equipment, well drilling derricks, skip hoists, mine hoists, truck body hoists, car or barge pullers, conveyors or excavating equipment when not used as a lifting crane.

Operators of cranes shall provide proof of certification upon request by an investigator. Individual certification may be received from the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) or another certifying entity that has been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. The regulation requires operators to renew their certification every five years.

The regulation will not apply to:

- a crane operator trainee or apprentice under the direct supervision of the holder of a valid crane operator certificate;
- workers directly employed by class 1 or 2 railroads, who have been qualified by the employing railroad as a crane operator, while working on property owned, leased or controlled by the employing railroad;
- workers employed by or performing work for a public utility, rural electric cooperative, municipality, telephone company or industrial manufacturing plant;
- workers subject to inspection and regulation under the Mine Safety and Health Act;
- workers engaged in boating, fishing, agriculture or arboriculture;
- workers who are members of or performing work for a uniform service or the United States Merchant Marines;
- people operating cranes for personal use on property owned or leased by that person; and
- people operating cranes in emergency situations.

Companies are urged to start the certification process early to avoid any major push when the July 1, 2007, deadline draws near. Currently, there are 12 other states that have certification or licensing requirements.

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