WESTERN NATIONAL INSURANCE
The relationship company

Qualified Signal Person

Loss Control Bulletin

Signal persons have a lot of safety responsibility. Inappropriate actions on the part of the signal person or failure to act when necessary can result in severe injuries to workers on the job site. OSHA has general requirements for employees that are designated as qualified signal persons.

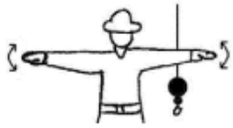
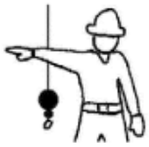
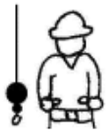
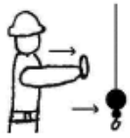
OSHA Requirements

- A signal person is required when:
  - The point of operation is not in full view of the operator
  - The operator's view is obstructed in the direction the equipment is traveling
  - Either the operator or the person handling the load determines that a signal person is needed because of site-specific safety concerns
- Employers must ensure that each signal person meets the qualification requirements prior to giving any signals. This requirement must be met by using one of the options below.
  - **Third-party qualified evaluator** - The signal person has documentation from a third-party qualified evaluator. A third-party qualified evaluator is an entity that, due to its independence and expertise, has demonstrated that it is competent in accurately assessing whether individuals meet the qualification requirements for a signal person.
  - **Employer's qualified evaluator** - The employer's qualified evaluator is a person employed by the signal person's employer who has demonstrated that he or she is competent in accurately assessing whether individuals meet the qualification requirements for a signal person. This person assesses the individual and determines that he or she meets the qualification requirements and provides documentation of that determination. An assessment by an employer's qualified evaluator under this option is not portable — other employers are not permitted to use it to meet the requirements of this section.
- The employer must make the documentation for whichever option is used available at the job site while the signal person is employed by the employer. The documentation must specify each type of signaling (e.g. hand signals, radio signals) for which the signal person meets the requirements of a qualified signal person.
- If subsequent actions by the signal person indicate that the individual does not meet the qualification requirements, the employer must not allow the individual to continue working as a signal person until retraining is provided and a reassessment is made.
- Each signal person must:
  - Know and understand the type of signals used. If hand signals are used, the signal person must know and understand the Standard Method for hand signals.
  - Be competent in using these signals.
  - Have a basic understanding of equipment operation and limitations, including the crane dynamics involved in swinging and stopping loads and boom deflection from hoisting loads.
  - Know and understand the relevant OSHA requirements 29 CFR 1926.1419 through 1926.1422 and 1926.1428.
  - Demonstrate that he or she meets the requirements through an oral or written test and through a practical test.

Signaling Safety Tips

- Before lift operations begin, be sure to test all electronic transmission signal devices such as radios and telephones.
- When using voice signals only, make sure you and the equipment operator have agreed on the voice signals that will be used. Each voice signal should contain the following elements, in order: function (such as hoist, boom, etc.), direction, distance and/or speed, and a stop command.
- Use the Standard Method for hand signals (attached at the end of this bulletin).
- If you have to use non-standard hand signals, communicate with the equipment operator ahead of time. Make sure you both agree on the hand signals you will use.
- Make sure you are the only person signaling the operator.
- When you give the operator a direction to move the load, be sure to provide it from the operator's direction perspective.
- Always be prepared to give an emergency stop signal.

Standard Hand Signals

 **STOP** – With arm extended horizontally to the side, palm down, arm is swung back and forth.	 **EMERGENCY STOP** – With both arms extended horizontally to the side, palms down, arms are swung back and forth.	 **HOIST** – With upper arm extended to the side, forearm and index finger pointing straight up, hand and finger make small circles.
 **RAISE BOOM** – With arm extended horizontally to the side, thumb points up with other fingers closed.	 **SWING** – With arm extended horizontally, index finger points in direction that boom is to swing.	 **RETRACT TELESCOPING BOOM** – With hands to the front at waist level, thumbs point at each other with other fingers closed.
 **RAISE THE BOOM AND LOWER THE LOAD** – With arm extended horizontally to the side and thumb pointing up, fingers open and close while load movement is desired.	 **DOG EVERYTHING** – Hands held together at waist level.	 **LOWER** – With arm and index finger pointing down, hand and finger make small circles.
 **LOWER BOOM** – With arm extended horizontally to the side, thumb points down with other fingers closed.	 **EXTEND TELESCOPING BOOM** – With hands to the front at waist level, thumbs point outward with other fingers closed.	 **TRAVEL/TOWER TRAVEL** – With all fingers pointing up, arm is extended horizontally out and back to make a pushing motion in the direction of travel.

 **LOWER THE BOOM AND RAISE THE LOAD** – With arm extended horizontally to the side and thumb pointing down, fingers open and close while load movement is desired.	 **MOVE SLOWLY** – A hand is placed in front of the hand that is giving the action signal.	 **USE AUXILIARY HOIST** (whipline) – With arm bent at elbow and forearm vertical, elbow is tapped with other hand. Then regular signal is used to indicate desired action.
 **CRAWLER CRANE TRAVEL, BOTH TRACKS** – Rotate fists around each other in front of body; direction of rotation away from body indicates travel forward; rotation towards body indicates travel backward.	 **USE MAIN HOIST** – A hand taps on top of the head. Then regular signal is given to indicate desired action.	 **CRAWLER CRANE TRAVEL, ONE TRACK** – Indicate track to be locked by raising fist on that side. Rotate other fist in front of body in direction that other track is to travel.
 **TROLLEY TRAVEL** – With palm up, fingers closed and thumb pointing in direction of motion, hand is jerked horizontally in direction trolley is to travel.		

References

- OSHA standard 1926.1428
- OSHA 1926 Subpart CC Appendix A – Standard Hand Signals