

Highlights of the new OSHA cranes and derricks rule

Rigger and Signal Person Training.

On August 9, 2010, OSHA issued a new construction standard on Cranes and Derricks. There are several sources of information on the rule, and the best place to start is OSHA's Cranes and Derricks page: <http://osha.gov/cranes-derricks/index.html> On that page, you can find a link to the standard, frequently asked questions, and a PowerPoint describing the rule. This page is also expected to be updated over time as OSHA issues interpretations on the rule.

The BCTD and CPWR have been asked many questions about the rule, but the most common question we get is about the training and certification requirements for Riggers and Signal Persons. This article addresses the training the standard requires and the documentation employers must maintain on that training. Because the requirements are very different, they will be described separately for Riggers and Signal Persons.

Riggers Riggers are not required to be certified by any independent organization. However, riggers must be *qualified* in two situations: (1) when rigging in connection with assembly/disassembly work; and (2) when rigging a load that will be handled by employees in the fall zone. The rigger would be considered qualified by possessing a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing; or by successfully demonstrating, through extensive knowledge, training, and experience, the ability to solve/resolve problems related to rigging work and related activities. The standard does not require riggers to have any particular training.

Most union training centers that have quality rigger education programs turn out riggers who would be considered *qualified riggers*, in our opinion. There is no basis for arguing that employees who have gone through a particular trade's apprenticeship and training program are the only people qualified to work as riggers.

Signal Persons As with riggers, signal persons do not have to be certified by an independent organization. However, the employer must ensure that all signal persons meet specific *qualification requirements* spelled out in the standard. Unlike the rigger, the



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signal person must be qualified by a *qualified evaluator*, someone who can demonstrate that he or she can accurately assess whether the individual meets the standard's qualification requirements. The *qualified evaluator* may be a third party or an employee of the signal person's employer. A signal person qualified by a *third party evaluator* may carry that qualification from employer to employer; qualification by an *employer's evaluator* is not portable.

A union training center that has independence and expertise and a demonstrated competence in assessing whether individuals meet the qualification requirements would certainly be considered a qualified third party evaluator. By working with signatory employers, union training centers can assess and verify the qualifications of signal persons and thereby enable the signal persons to work for multiple employers.

The regulatory text in section 1926.1428 addresses signal person qualifications, qualified evaluators, documentation the employer must keep, specific qualification requirements, and testing requirements. A union training center that wants to take on the role of a third party qualified evaluator should review these provisions in detail.

Who can conduct the training? The crane standard does not specify who can conduct rigger and signal person training but, as is the case with all OSHA standards, it makes the employer responsible for complying with all training and verification requirements. In fact, the crane rule generally requires employers to train "each qualified person regarding the requirements of this subpart applicable to their respective roles" related to their work with and around cranes and derricks. These requirements are spelled out in 1926.1430, and are meant to address all workers who may be exposed to hazards from cranes, not just riggers and signal persons.

As the training providers for signatory employers, the Local JATCs can help employers fulfill these requirements. We recommend that Local JATCs work with contractors to develop documentation of training provided to riggers and signal persons, as well as to set up third party qualification evaluations so signal person testing/assessment can be portable among employers.

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