



BC Association for
CRANE SAFETY

Crane Operator Qualification

INDUSTRY WORKSHOP REPORT

BOOM TRUCK TASKGROUP MEETING #3

Construction Labour Relations Association,

New Westminster, BC

January 23, 2006

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In Attendance:	Ken Morrison	BC Hydro
	Jim Barkman	Eagle West
	Richard Schneck	Pheonix Truck Crane
	Kerry Hawley	Mega Crane
	Bill Sandhu	B&B Truss
	Gord Lindberg	Operating Engineers Local 115
	Fraser Cocks	BCACS (Executive Director)
	Kathy Sheppard	WorkSafeBC (Work Group Coordinator)
	Lee Middleton	Fulford Harbour Consulting (Facilitator)

Background

This workshop was the third in a series of task group workshops for boom truck industry stakeholders. These stakeholders are working toward a competency based, licensing and certification framework for boom truck operators in BC. The BC Association for Crane Safety is facilitating this process and providing the administrative support needed for industry to lead this change. The competency based certification framework will be used by WorkSafeBC as the foundation for a crane safety regulation to be enacted in January 2007.

The previous two workshops focused on defining the skills standards for boom truck operators. Attention was paid to skills standards first because having these agreed to by industry is important for these reasons:

1. Skills standards define the assessment of a competent operator.
2. Skills standards show what different levels the operator requires to do their job.
3. Skills standards lay out a training and career pathway for operators.

Together with the industry supported operator licensing structure, which was the focus of this, the third workshop, the skills standard outlines the framework for a competency based operator standard as well as the training required to get new operators to the required competency standard. The framework also shows what training and experience existing operators need to be able to move to higher certifications or to move within the industry.

Workshop Goals

The boom crane operator occupation spans a number of industries and a variety of equipment types including stiff and folding booms as well as lifting capacities ranging from 8 tons to over 40 tons. In developing a certification structure it is important to strike a balance between certification requirements that ensure a safe and competent level of operation and one that does not impose an inappropriate number and/or level of competencies for the different levels of required work.

Refine certification structure

In the third workshop we set out to refine the certification structure to strike the right balance between licensing complication and the operational realities of the industry.

Assessment strategy

After reviewing the certification strategy decide on assessment points and the type of assessment used at each point and at the final end point of certification. These assessments will be used to certify existing operators.

A related goal was to define an industry approach to assess existing operators in as streamlined a way possible to maximize safety while also keeping the administrative burden low enough that it doesn't become a hurdle to develop and implement a competency based crane safety regulation.

Tracking and documentation

Explore ways crane operator's licenses and record of certification can be stored, documented and validated by employers.

Business models

Describe preferences for a business model to implement and coordinate all necessary crane certification assessment and documentation, and map out funding options that might be available to support this model from existing government industry training funds.

Certification Structure

During the workshop, a certification structure emerged that identified a base level of competency and then a division of the certification levels by major crane type (folding and stiff boom) and by lifting capacity. Following the approach taken by the mobile crane stakeholders, the boom truck stakeholders reduced the certification and assessment points and described an integrated approach to certifying folding and stiff boom operator competency.

Appendix A contains the diagram of the competency structure proposed for boom truck operators.

Assessment Options

Once the certification structure was decided upon by the group, assessment points were assumed to occur at the transition from one certification level to the next. These assessments would be required for an operator to be certified at the next level.

On the Draft Certification structure the diagram shows the assessment points with a star. The group discussed assessments in a general sense describing what they felt would work as an approach to assessing competence at different levels, with a focus on existing operators. They came up with some principles of assessment that they directed the Association and contractors to adhere to when designing an assessment program for boom truck operators.

Principles of assessment

- 1 **Assess competency at a test site:** Due to the short length of time boom trucks often spend at one spot it was seen as impractical to focus on an on the job assessment strategy as had the mobile crane stakeholders. Instead boom truck stakeholders propose that operators be booked into a testing time slot with their equipment and run through a set of practical assessments with an independent assessor. The practical assessments would be chosen randomly from a selection of ten that are publicized in the sector.
- 2 **Use an independent mobile assessor:** Use an assessor who is very skilled as an operator, who has received training in assessing operators on the job, and who is independent i.e. not affiliated with the employer the operator works for.
- 3 **Produce assessment tools that are public:** The industry would like to see assessment tools that are publicly available, closely linked into the skills standards for the operator and which can be used to guide operator learning prior to assessment.
- 4 **Link theory and practice:** When assessing on the job, and even when assessing in a practical, formal test, carefully design the tools so that a person's theoretical knowledge is demonstrated without their having to write a written test.
- 5 **Don't write off written tests:** Stakeholders pointed out the value of motivating people to study technical material when they know a return test will be delivered at the end of the study period. The stakeholders propose that material be made available for study by operators and that during an assessment period the operator answers test questions in either a written or a verbal format.

- 6 **Define a limited use assessment point:** In consultation with stakeholders there is a defined need for a restricted use operator class. The executive director presented a list of ten points that were suggested to him by industry as the framework for a restricted use category. Further definition and decisions are required to concretely define this type of operator license at the fourth session. Kathy Sheppard noted that the wording of the regulation in regard equipment types covered may guide what equipment types are covered by a restricted operator class.

Tracking and documentation

Stakeholders felt that a certification system had to be very easy to use and implement. They provided the association with some principles to stick with in going out and designing a tracking and documentation of competency (licensing) system. These were:

- 1 **Have the system third party verified:** In short what the employers wanted was a place to go and verify the accuracy of the licensing information an operator presents.
- 2 **Link licensing to a Logbook:** If an operator wishes to move through the certification levels having a way to document with some detail their experience against the skill requirements of the next licensing level is important. Additionally recertification options would depend very much on being able to track an operators working history, the idea being active operators would have less frequent and less onerous recertification requirements.
- 3 **Track the safety record of each operator:** Stakeholders felt a third party association should have responsibility for tracking the safety record of each operator by logging accidents. This is similar to the driving licensing scheme in use in the Province.
- 4 **Link with companies existing record keeping:** Some companies are already tracking the competency of their operators and stakeholders felt that for the assessment and licensing system to work most effectively in the Province, these existing structures should be used to support licensing where they exist.

Business model

In the preliminary discussion at the meeting stakeholders directed the association to draft a business model that showed how, and at what cost, the linked assessment system for all crane operators would work. The stakeholders were told of funds from the Industry Training Authority that could be secured for development, in partnership with WorkSafeBC, of assessment tools. The Federal Government may be in a position to support development of Logbooks.

Stakeholders were also quite clear that a user pay component for financing of the business model, provided the products of these fees were clear and unambiguous, was quite acceptable. This possibility will be explored further, as with the other funding sources, once the certification framework and assessment plan is drafted in more detail.

Next steps

The next task group meeting is scheduled for February 14th. At that meeting stakeholders will review a more detailed assessment plan as well as a more precisely defined certification structure. It is anticipated that task groups will meet every two to three weeks to develop a fully stakeholder driven competency certification plan drafted in final form by April for presentation at public hearing in May.

Letter of support

Additionally, in order to demonstrate industry support of this plan in anticipation of securing government development funding, a letter of support will be required by the end of February. Precise format of this letter will be covered at the next meeting on February 14th; generally the letter should cover the following:

- Demand for new trainees in your operation expected over the next five years.
- Need for a certification structure that supports competent operation in the province and your operation's desire to work with that certification structure.
- Desire to see a practical or competency based assessment to prove operator competence.
- Statement that once such a training and certification system is in place, that you will use it

Appendix A Draft Certification Structure

Boom Truck Operator: January 23/06 Model

