



BC Association for
CRANE SAFETY

Crane Operator Qualification

INDUSTRY WORKSHOP REPORT

MOBILE CRANE TASK GROUP MEETING #3

*Construction Labour Relations Association,
New Westminster, BC
January 23, 2006*

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In Attendance:	Rob Magee	GWIL Industries
	Larry Sinclair	Marine & Pile Driving (Work Group Coordinator)
	Gordon Lindberg	Operating Engineers Local 115
	Bob MacMillan	GWIL Industries
	Mike Maitland	Sterling Crane
	Peter Miller	JJM Construction
	Kerry Hawley	Mega Crane
	Dominic Verhelst	Teckcominco
	Fraser Cocks	BCACS (Executive Director)
	Kathy Sheppard	WorkSafeBC
	Lee Middleton	Fulford Harbour Consulting (Facilitator)

Background

This workshop was the third in a series of task group workshops for mobile crane industry stakeholders. These stakeholders are working toward a competency based, licensing and certification framework for mobile crane 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 mobile crane 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 perform 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 mobile crane operator occupation spans a number of industries and a variety of equipment types including hydraulic and lattice booms as well as lifting capacities ranging from less than 40 tons to over 125 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 (hydraulic and lattice boom) and by lifting capacity. Completion of all of the individual certifications would collectively constitute the Red Seal certification for mobile crane operator.

Appendix A contains the diagram of the competency structure proposed for mobile crane 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 the requirement 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 mobile crane operators.

Principles of assessment

- 1 **Assess competency on the job:** Due to the length of time set up requires on a mobile crane the industry supports assessment of operators while they are performing their regular duties.
- 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 **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.

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 April for presentation at public hearing in May.

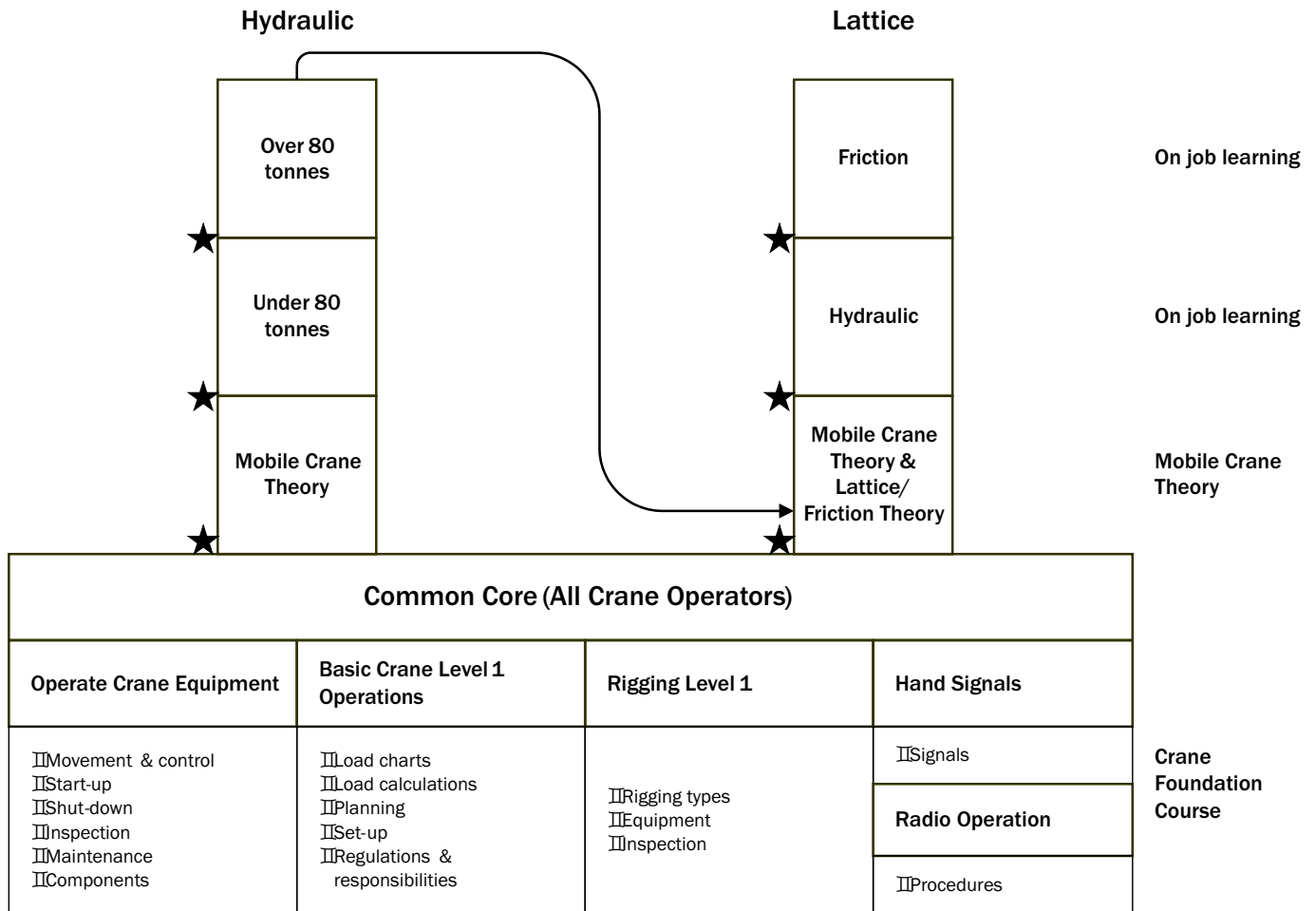
Letter of support

Additionally, in order to demonstrate industry support of this plan in anticipation of securing government 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

Mobile Crane Operator: January 23/06 Model



★ = Assessment / Certification Point