

## National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (CCO)

### **What the innovation is.**

The National Crane Operator Certification Program (CCO) is a nationwide assessment program that determines the competency of crane operators through medical, written, and practical examinations.

### **Why it is innovative.**

The CCO program is the result of more than 10 years continuous work by representatives of the construction industry to develop an independent method of assessing crane operator proficiency. It marks the first time that industry crane experts have teamed up with exam development professionals to construct fair, valid, and reliable examinations. Main features are that it is: national in scope; operated by the private sector; independent of labor relations policies; tailored to different types of cranes; designed so certifications must be renewed every five years; and tested in three parts: medical, written, and practical. The CCO program has been accredited by a nationally recognized professional credentialing authority (the National Commission for Certifying Agencies-NCCA) and officially recognized by Federal OSHA in a formal Agreement signed in February 1999.

### **What it changed or replaced.**

In the absence of a national licensing requirement, assessment of crane operators prior to the establishment of the CCO program was often a "hit or miss" affair. Many employers had no formal evaluation process, and those that did could not be sure their procedures met either OSHA regulations or the ANSI (ASME) standards that OSHA incorporates. Consequently many operators were either trained to varying standards or not trained at all. CCO has "leveled the playing field" by defining the knowledge and skill that all crane operators should have to safely operate a crane, and then developing fair and reliable examinations to assess competency.

### **Where and when it originated.**

CCO has its origins in discussions on construction safety initiated in the late-1980s by an ad hoc industry group representing the principal users and manufacturers of cranes from all sectors of the construction industry. Facing what they felt was an unacceptable number of accidents involving cranes, and noting that most involve operator error to some degree, this group determined that crane operator skills needed to be improved. Rather than trying to standardize training, they believed an independent national program of operator evaluation using professionally developed examinations (i.e. "certification") should motivate employers to meet the existing federal requirement to provide professional training for their crane operators. The National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (CCO) was established as an independent, non-profit organization in January 1995. Testing through the medical and written examinations began in April 1996. A practical "hands-on" examination was added in January 1999.

### **Where it has been used, and is expected to be used in the future.**

Because it fairly and reliably assesses crane operator qualifications, the CCO program is being adopted by employers in a wide variety of industries nationwide. Utilities, construction firms, steel erectors, crane rental firms, petrochemical companies, and others are increasingly specifying CCO certification when hiring. Major project owners are including it in their bid specifications. Insurance firms also appreciate its role as an effective risk management tool. Following federal OSHA's recognition of the program, several states are considering incorporating the CCO program into their licensing requirements. In its first four years, CCO tested 12,000 operators in 45 states. As its impact on construction safety becomes more widely acknowledged, the CCO program is increasingly being perceived as the industry standard for crane operator assessment.

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The National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators

CCO PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Late 1980s

Lack of operator qualifications identified as major factor in crane accidents.

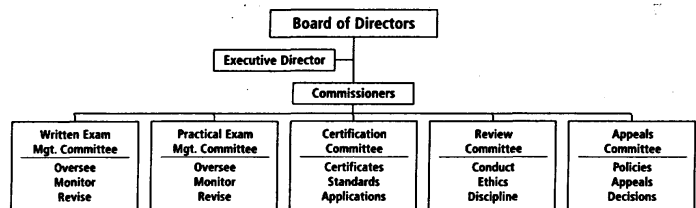
1990

Task Force on Crane Operator Certification solicits industry experts.

January 1995

National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (CCO) is formed as an independent, not-for-profit, 501(c) 6, organization.

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April 1995

Job Analysis initiated, followed by examination development.

April 1996

CCO Program implemented using written and medical examinations.

December 1996

Number of operators tested passes 1,000 mark.

April 1998

CCO accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

September 1998

Examiner Accreditation Program developed to qualify individuals to administer CCO Practical Examination.

January 1999

CCO Practical Examination implemented.

February 1999

Federal OSHA formally recognizes the CCO program.

April 2000

12,000 crane operators have been tested through more than 400 test administrations in 45 states.

Accredited by:



CCO PRACTICAL EXAM SITE LAYOUT

