

CERTIFIED CRANE OPERATORS SAFER FOR BOTH EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS SAYS WORKSAFEBC

Richmond, BC January 12, 2007: Certification of BC's crane operators will be good for the industry, its workers and the general public says WorkSafeBC.

On July 1, 2007 WorkSafeBC will begin to enforce a Regulation requiring all operators of boom, tower and mobile cranes in BC to hold a certificate proving competency. The Regulation proclaimed January 1, 2007, gives current and new operators six months to move through the assessment process.

Speaking at the announcement in Prince George the Honourable Olga Ilich, Minister of Labour and Citizens' Services said, "Employers and labour fully support this regulation, because it means that everyone who works around cranes will know that the operator is fully qualified, making for a safer workplace."

The Regulation, developed after broad consultation with employers, labour and municipal authorities, applies to all crane operators and defines the competencies required to move through three levels. Each level would give clarity to the types of equipment people are qualified to operate at any given point in time. Operators, as they are able to prove competencies, will be able to move through the levels.

Fraser Cocks, Executive Director of the BC Association for Crane Safety (BCACS) said, "We have worked extensively with crane industry stakeholders and we firmly believe we have developed a progressive, industry supported model and system for crane operators in BC."

The BCACS, formed to provide leadership for health and safety development with in the crane hoisting industry, with representation on its Board of Directors from industry, labour and business association developed the operator qualification program. It will also promote the industry to prospective operators and serve as an advisory body on regulatory matters.

Gary Kroeker, Business Manager, International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 115 and a member of the Board of Directors of the BCACS said, "This certification process brings a greater degree of assurance to workers and the public at large. The new standard also provides more certainty about the qualifications and skills of workers."

In BC there are about 5,000 cranes used in a variety of industries from manufacturing to construction and oil and gas. Until this Regulation, there was no common standard on which to base a decision about which piece of equipment an operator was able to use. Implementation of the standard gives an operator job mobility.

Discussions are ongoing between the BCACS, Alberta, and Ontario and industry stakeholders to harmonize qualification standards to enhance operator mobility.

Serving nearly two million workers and about 185,000 employers, WorkSafeBC is a provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors and funded by employers. WorkSafeBC was born out of a compromise between BC's workers and employers in 1917 where workers gave up the right to sue their employers or fellow workers for injuries on the job in return for a no-fault insurance program fully paid for by employers. WorkSafeBC is committed to a safe and healthy workplace and to providing return-to-work rehabilitation and legislated compensation benefits to workers injured as a result of their employment.

For further information or to arrange an interview call:

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