

Committed to Crane Safety

Employer Recognition Program



PROUDLY
EMPLOYING
CERTIFIED
OPERATORS



PROUDLY
EMPLOYING
CERTIFIED
RIGGERS



PROUDLY
EMPLOYING
CERTIFIED
SIGNALPERSONS



Executives from several of the charter members of NCCCO's new *Committed to Crane Safety* Employer Recognition Program sat down recently to discuss their thoughts on the value of CCO certification.



Jeffrey Hammons,
Vice President of
Risk Management
at AmQuip Crane
Rental



Chip Pockock,
Safety and
Risk Manager,
Buckner
Companies,
Graham, NC.



**Heather
FitzGerald,**
Owner, Rent-A-
Crane, Lorton, VA



**Thom
Sickelsteel,**
President,
Sickelsteel
Cranes
Inc., Mount
Vernon, WA.



Sam Rogers,
Senior Corporate
Crane Safety
Coordinator,
Zachry
Industrial, San
Antonio, TX.

Employers reap benefits of CCO

Since its founding in January 1995, the National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) has continually grown as a non-profit organization with a mission “to develop effective performance standards for those who work in and around cranes; provide fair, valid, and reliable assessments of their knowledge and skill; and act as an authoritative industry resource of related information.”

CCO programs have always been developed by industry for industry. NCCCO's Commissioners, Board of Directors and committee volunteers include representatives of contractors, labor unions, rental firms, owners, government, regulatory and standards-setting agencies, steel erectors, manufacturers, equipment distributors, construction firms, training consultants, and insurance companies.

In September 2012, NCCCO launched its *Committed to Crane Safety* program, which recognizes the time, effort, and resources expended by companies in obtaining certification for their crane operators and related personnel. The general consensus of this program's charter members is that CCO certification has driven operators to perform on a more professional level, raised their awareness of best practices, helped obtain and retain business, and, most importantly, significantly improved safety.

Executives from five of the charter companies of that program recently shared their thoughts on the value of CCO certification. The panel participants are:

JEFFREY HAMMONS, Vice President of Risk Management at AmQuip Crane Rental, Trevoze, PA. CCO certification is required by AmQuip and all its customers. AmQuip has participated in CCO

programs since their inception in 1995.

CHIP POCOCC, Safety and Risk Manager, Buckner Companies, Graham, NC. The company requires all crane operators to be certified. Buckner has participated in CCO programs since 1996.

HEATHER FITZGERALD, Owner, Rent-A-Crane, Lorton, VA. All Rent-A-Crane operators

must have CCO Crane Operator and Signalperson certification, or be working toward certification through apprenticeship. All truck drivers/riggers must have Signalperson and Rigger I certification or be working toward certification. Rigger II is offered on an optional basis. The company has participated in CCO programs for 17 years.

THOM SICKLESTEEL, President, Sickelsteel Cranes Inc., Mount Vernon, WA. All Sickelsteel crane operators must have CCO certification, field supervisory personnel must take CCO written exams, and full-time field personnel must attain CCO Rigger and Signalperson certification. The company has participated in CCO programs for 15 years.

SAM ROGERS, Senior Corporate Crane Safety Coordinator, Zachry Industrial, San Antonio, TX. All Zachry operators must achieve certification in their category of mobile crane within 90 days of employment, except when project or state requirements are more stringent. The company has participated in CCO programs for more than 10 years.

ACT: WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT OF CCO CERTIFICATION ON YOUR COMPANY?

Pockock (Buckner): We have seen a significant reduction in the number of crane related incidents, an increased knowledge and skill level of operators, a better understanding by the operators of their responsibilities and authority, and a reduction of insurance premiums. Over time, this has also produced a higher quality operator in the seats of our machines and has improved customer satisfaction and confidence.

Hammons (AmQuip): We've had a similar experience. CCO certification has driven the operators to perform on a more professional level, raising the awareness of best practices. Our customers have a greater sense of safety and security, knowing our operators are tested and certified in their craft.

FitzGerald (Rent-A-Crane): We required NCCCO certification for our operators long before certification became required



multiple Certification

by law in our service area. Jobs in the D.C. Metro area have required CCO certification for years, so we have been able to compete for government and military jobs that we otherwise would not have been qualified for.

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): We've also enjoyed multiple benefits. CCO has helped us train and qualify our workforce, as well as provide a recognizable level of quality assurance.

Rogers (Zachry): For us, the benefits were pretty obvious right away. By requiring CCO certification for all operators, Zachry decreased crane incident cost by 80% in the first year of implementation.

ACT: HOW HAS CCO CONTRIBUTED TO SAFETY IN GENERAL?

Hammons (AmQuip): Like Sam just noted of his experience at Zachry, we have had a noticeable, significant improvement of both leading and lagging safety indicators since the initiation of the NCCCO.

Pocock (Buckner): We have benefited from a reduction of accidents, increased operator knowledge and lower insurance premiums.

FitzGerald (Rent-A-Crane): I am a huge believer in training. The more you know, the better decisions you will make. We still have some people who make the wrong decisions from time to time, but training for CCO certification has made our employees more aware of their responsibilities as an operator, signalperson and rigger.

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): : That's true for us, also. CCO certification provides a standard within our company that we will achieve. This has resulted in training, education, and communication about crane regulations and industry standards. It puts our company on the same page—from the operators all the way to management. Our operators now not only have a better understanding of the standards but they also know the areas of responsibility.

Rogers (Zachry): Operators are clearly more knowledgeable overall now. They're more likely to cease operations and demand corrections—in part because they're more aware of safety concerns.

ACT: HOW EFFECTIVE IS CCO AS A RISK MANAGEMENT TOOL?

Hammons (AmQuip): A more knowledgeable operator, steeped in best practices and tested, tried and true helps mitigate the potential for loss to both the company and the customer.

Pocock (Buckner): Right, it's a great risk management tool. Having a higher class of operator, we have seen less accidents/Incidents, which reduces our risk.

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): CCO certification establishes the minimum bar for the employer in a way that there can be confidence in quality of the knowledge base of the crane operators. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the standards and regulations that CCO tests on, define areas of responsibilities and processes for resolving issues. This knowledge has been important for every member of our staff to understand.

Rogers (Zachry): Our company can point to the significant results of top-notch certification and assure our customers that we are committed to the CCO certification program.

ACT: WHAT OTHER BENEFITS OF CCO CERTIFICATION DOES YOUR COMPANY ENJOY?

Hammons (AmQuip): Our operators' CCO certification has definitely helped us market ourselves. Being the fourth largest crane company in the country, we are the fourth or fifth largest employer of crane operators. Having nearly 100% of our operators CCO certified has given our customers and potential customers a high level of confidence in our employees' abilities to get the job done and get it done safely.

FitzGerald (Rent-A-Crane): Likewise, we see the marketing value of CCO certification. We have been able to advertise the fact that we have NCCCO operators as a method of gaining new business. More recently, we have been able to offer training for CCO certification to our customers more regularly with the creation of our training division. Also, the fact that we only employ certified operators has been part of our insurance bidding process for years.

Pocock (Buckner): That insurance benefit

A broad portfolio of certifications

To date, NCCCO has administered over 650,000 written and practical examinations to more than 150,000 operators in all 50 states, ensuring that a significant portion of crane operators throughout the nation are informed, trained, and qualified. Here is NCCCO's current portfolio of certification programs, along with the year each was launched:

- Mobile Crane Operator (1996)
- Tower Crane Operator (2004)
- Overhead Crane Operator (2005)
- Signalperson (2008)
- Rigger—Level I (2009) and II (2010)
- Articulating Crane Operator (2010)
- Crane Inspector (2011)
- Digger Derrick Operator (2012)
- Lift Director (2013)
- Service Truck Crane Operator (2013)

“ Having nearly 100% of our operators CCO certified has given our customers a high level of confidence in our employees' ability to get the job done, and get it done safely. ”

Jeffrey Hammons, Vice President of Risk Management, AmQuip Crane Rental.

really is significant. As a result of the program, we enjoy lowered insurance premiums, greater customer satisfaction and generally enhanced marketability.

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): We believe that a company that requires CCO certification is one that desires to be a standard bearer. The industry recognizes NCCCO as the leader. To associate our name with CCO is an honor. Additionally, our insurance companies specifically look for NCCCO certifications of operators when they evaluate our company.

Rogers (Zachry): Many of our maintenance customers have seen us in the act of administering practical exams on their site and have asked us to administer training and testing for their operators and riggers as well. Needless to say, this helps our relationships with the clients. Zachry also uses the CCO written exams for an unintended purpose: we require our Crane Supervisors and Lift Directors to pass both the core and specialty exams in whatever category of cranes they are to implement, even if they don't actually operate cranes. Many of our safety professionals have attended classroom training and even tested in order to get a better understanding of that aspect of their work.

ACT: HAVE YOU NOTICED ANY POSITIVE EFFECT ON PERSONNEL AS A RESULT OF YOUR COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO NCCCO CERTIFICATION?

Rogers (Zachry): Absolutely. It puts them on "the same page." Also, operators and their supervisors are usually competitive by nature. They don't just want to pass exams and go on with their work; they keep each other sharp by challenging each other with the facts. Quite often, the CCO program is used as a hiring incentive. Operators who have been looking for an opportunity to certify will come to Zachry because we're known for giving that opportunity free of charge. Years ago, we had an in-house qualification process that we used; when we went to a distant area and hired local talent, we just left them with more experience. Now, we leave them with time left on a 5-year portable certification.

Hammons (AmQuip): Without a doubt, the CCO program has given our operators and personnel a higher level of professionalism, a higher skill and knowledge set and a greater sense of pride in accomplishment, knowing they are recognized for being good at what they do.

Pocock (Buckner): There is definitely a higher degree of trust now in operators' knowledge and ability, especially where they support our own internal operations.

FitzGerald (Rent-A-Crane): And they deserve that trust. CCO-certified personnel are more aware of their roles and responsibilities, and they have a very good understanding of how responsible they are for their actions. It makes them more risk-averse in general.

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): Participating in the CCO program has had two primary effects on our operators. First, our operators are more knowledgeable. And second, the questions regarding our operator qualifications have all but subsided. Achieving a nationally recognized certification not only instills a sense of pride, but it also is a great tool to communicate to the outside world that we know what we are doing.

ACT: WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT INTRODUCED BY NCCCO?

Sicklesteel (Sicklesteel Cranes): Introducing the practical exams was the most important development. At a time where crane operator certification was not a requirement, NCCCO was the first crane operator certification body to recognize the importance of the practical exam. The practical exam process and design were the typical type of pioneering efforts where NCCCO established itself as the industry leader.

Pocock (Buckner): I agree that the addition of practical exams was a significant step in the overall program development. But what truly stands out is that the program was perceived and developed by the crane and rigging industry and that NCCCO has continued to add programs such as Tower Crane Operator, Overhead Operator, Signalperson, Rigger and Inspector as the industry demands have increased.

FitzGerald (Rent-A-Crane): Standardizing personnel training requirements in general has been the most important development. I don't know much about the progression of things, but it would seem that most other offerings follow NCCCO's model.

Rogers (Zachry): I think we all agree that an especially significant development in the mobile crane program in particular has to be the addition of the practical exam. Overall, the additions of tower and rigger programs also have helped

considerably. Programs for crane inspectors and lift directors should have a great positive impact as well, when they take off.

Hammons (AmQuip): You really can't overestimate the importance of the certification of riggers and signalpersons. Now three areas of potential loss—setting up the load (riggers), lifting the load (operators), and signaling the directions of movement of the load (signalpersons)—are tested and tried and proven to hold the best practices consistent within their mode of operation.

ACT: Thank you all very much for sharing your insights. To learn more about NCCCO and CCO certification programs, call (703) 560-2391 or visit the NCCCO website at www.nccco.org.

“ In addition to being accredited by ANSI since 2007, CCO certification programs have earned multiple commendations from ANSI assessors for program design, test integrity and psychometric excellence. ”