

New B.C. Tower Crane Requirements In Effect October 1, 2024



On October 1, 2024, WorkSafeBC introduced new regulations (the Crane Regulations) regarding tower crane safety which amend [Part 14 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#) (the OHS Regulation) in British Columbia. The Crane Regulations will require every employer responsible for tower crane activity to submit a Notice of Project–Tower Crane (NOP-TC) to WorkSafeBC and to ensure a qualified supervisor is in place.

The following discussion highlights the most significant changes to the OHS Regulation for crane operators and supervisors. This blog post is current to October 28, 2024.

Who needs to submit a Notice of Project?

The OHS Regulation requires owners, prime contractors and/or employers to notify WorkSafeBC before undertaking potentially hazardous construction projects. How much notice is required depends on the type of project, and it ranges from 24 hours to 30 days.

A separate Notice of Project (NOP) is required for each project type (e.g., tower crane activity at a future construction project would require two NOPs, as described below).

Tower Crane Notice of Project

WorkSafeBC has stated that the NOP-TC will guide its inspection approach, enhance safety efforts, and facilitate engagement before the tower crane work begins.¹ While a NOP is already required for other types of project activities, the NOP-TC will provide WorkSafeBC with more information on tower crane activities in British Columbia, like identifying the qualified supervisor responsible for the tower crane activity.

Starting October 1, 2024, every employer responsible for tower crane activity, as well as either the owner or any party engaged by the owner to be the prime contractor, must ensure that an NOP-TC is submitted to WorkSafeBC at least two weeks before tower crane activity begins. Crane activity includes erecting, climbing, repositioning, or dismantling a tower crane. Tower crane is defined in the Crane Regulations as “a tower crane that is erected at site from component parts, or that is self-erecting.”

[Part 14.73.3 \(3\)](#) of the OHS Regulation states that the NOP-TC must include the:

- name and contact information for the parties responsible for the crane activity (including any person engaged by the owner of the property to be the prime contractor and all persons who may be qualified supervisors in relation to the crane activity);
- address or location of the workplace;
- nature and scope of the crane activity and of the project that involves the crane activity;
- start date and estimated duration of the crane activity;
- identification information for the tower crane such as manufacturer, type, model number and configuration of the tower crane;
- work procedures specific to the workplace that ensure the safety of a person during crane activity; and

- qualifications of the person who is the qualified supervisor.

Qualified Supervisors

[Part 14.73.1 \(1\)](#) of the OHS Regulation defines a “qualified supervisor” as a supervisor who is qualified to erect, climb, reposition or dismantle, as the case may be, a particular tower crane.

One focus of the Crane Regulations is ensuring that crane operators and supervisors demonstrate competency before undertaking any work. [Part 14.73.2](#) states that the erection, climbing, repositioning and dismantling of a tower crane must be done by qualified persons, in accordance with the instructions of the tower crane manufacturer or a professional engineer (if the installation varies from the crane manufacturer’s instructions), and under the direction of a qualified supervisor.

New Guidelines

WorkSafeBC has introduced two preliminary guidelines to assist employers with preparing for the implementation of the Regulations:

[G14.73.1 Tower cranes–Qualified supervisor](#) describes the qualifications and competencies necessary to be a qualified supervisor for tower crane activities.

[G14.73.3 Notice of project–Significant changes](#) identifies the kind of information in the NOP-TC that would generally be considered a significant change and provides instructions on how to ensure WorkSafeBC receives the new information in writing.

Crane Safety in British Columbia

Earlier this year, WorkSafeBC brought together crane-sector stakeholders to identify and address gaps in crane safety following several crane-related incidents across the province.² WorkSafeBC developed a new crane and rigging risk-reduction strategy with recommendations aimed at further improving tower crane safety in British Columbia, outlined in a June 18, 2024 [news release](#), which references the July 12, 2021 crane collapse on a residential tower building site in Kelowna that killed five workers.

“There are approximately 350 tower cranes currently operating in British Columbia. While tower cranes typically operate safely and without incident, they have the potential to create catastrophic risk to workers and the public”, said WorkSafeBC in a September 18, 2024 [news release](#).

“WorkSafeBC has determined that the risks associated with cranes in British Columbia are increasing as more cranes are in operation than ever before, and work is taking place on increasingly complex, multi-employer worksites.” Recent incidents in Vancouver resulted in road and transit closures and highlight these risks.

Conclusion

Work site owners, parties assuming the role of prime contractor, and employers responsible for crane activities must all educate themselves on the new amendments, including the specific supervision and notice requirements. Failure to do so has the potential to attract material sanction and liability under the applicable health and safety legislation.

It is possible that further amendments to the OHS Regulation may follow at some point in the future as ongoing discussions with the B.C. Ministry of Labour, SkilledTradesBC, and industry stakeholders will continue to inform WorkSafeBCs

strategy to enhance tower crane safety along with the new NOP-TC requirement.

Notably, the equivalent Occupational Health and Safety legislation in Alberta and Ontario does not require crane owners or operators to provide notice before tower crane activity. As such, interprovincial construction companies and crane operators need to be mindful of the differences when engaging in project work in British Columbia.

Footnotes

1. WorkSafeBC news release dated September 18, 2024: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2024/September/new-tower-crane-regulation-takes-effect-oct-1>

2. WorkSafeBC Media Backgrounder: Tower Crane Safety: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/about-us/news-and-events/backgrounders/tower-crane-safety?lang=en>

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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