



New York State Department of Labor

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Labor Department Suspends 129 Crane Operator's Licenses
Department discovered crane operators failed exam

Labor Commissioner M. Patricia Smith announced today the suspension of 129 Crane Operator's Certificates, after discovering that licenses were issued to individuals who failed the practical exam. The Labor Department took this immediate action after the Office of the State Inspector General, in the course of an ongoing investigation, notified the Labor Department that the certificates were wrongly issued from 1972-2000.

"This is a public safety issue," said Commissioner Smith. "As of today, these crane operators are not certified to operate a crane in New York State. We are urging them to retake the practical exam or their licenses will be revoked."

In May 2007, the State Inspector General's Office, acting on complaints, initiated a comprehensive investigation of the process by which DOL tests and licenses crane operators. In the course of this investigation, the Inspector General obtained evidence that the DOL Licensing and Certification Unit improperly issued licenses to individuals who had failed the crane operator's practical exam.

State Inspector General Kristine Hamann said, "It is absolutely essential that the public feel safe and certain that New York State is licensing only qualified workers. My office is continuing to examine crane operator's certification, and we welcome any relevant information."

The Labor Department is conducting a complete audit of approximately 3,000 state crane operators to ensure that their certifications were issued based on a passing score. The 129 licenses suspended today are based on an audit of approximately 1,000 operators, so it's likely that the department will suspend additional licenses in the coming weeks.

Individuals who failed the practical exam have been notified by the Department. The Department is offering expedited retesting of all affected crane operators and the first round of practical exams will occur as early as next month. If individuals do not contact the Department by November 16, they risk having their certifications revoked.

The Department has also looked into the safety record of the individuals who failed the exam and found that five have been involved in crane accidents, with four being mechanical in nature. In one of the accidents, the operator was found to be responsible and his crane license was suspended for three months.

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