

DOSH DIRECTIVE

Department of Labor & Industries
Division of Occupational Safety and Health
Keeping Washington safe and working

8.75 Tower Crane Permits & Safety

Date: November 21, 2025

I. Purpose

This Directive establishes inspection procedures and enforcement policies related to permit requirements for tower cranes when used to perform construction work.

II. Scope and Application

A. This Directive applies to all DOSH operations statewide.

B. The scope of this directive is applicable to all tower cranes when used to perform construction work, and those employers who will be involved in the operation, assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration of a tower crane when used to perform construction work.

Note: Employers involved in the operation, assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration of a tower crane typically include, but are not limited to, the crane owner, crane user, prime contractor, lift director, crane operator, rigger, signal person, and Assembly/Disassembly (A/D) director.

C. Self-erecting tower cranes as defined by ASME B30.29 are excluded from the tower crane permit requirements, but not from chapter 296-155 WAC, Part L, requirements.

III. References

Chapter 296-155 WAC, Part L, Cranes, Rigging, and Personnel Lifting.
RCW 49.17.400 through 49.17.445.

IV. Background

In April 2019, a tower crane collapsed in Seattle, leading to multiple fatalities. In response, the Washington State Legislature passed Second Substitute House Bill (2SHB) 2022 during the 2024 session. This legislation established new requirements for tower cranes, including the need for permits, expanded definitions, and additional safety obligations.

2SHB 2022 is codified under RCW 49.17.400 through 49.17.445 (Chapter 311, Laws of 2024). Some requirements took effect January 1, 2025; however, the specific requirement for tower crane permits is effective January 1, 2026.

To implement the law, L&I created the Tower Crane Permit Program within DOSH. These statutory requirements are further detailed in chapter 296-155 WAC, Part L (Cranes, Rigging, and Personnel Lifting). A new section, WAC 296-155-53911, specifically establishes the requirements related to tower crane permits.

V. **Enforcement Policies**

The following guidelines are for addressing tower cranes that are performing construction work in Washington State:

A. **Citing and classifying violations.**

Any citations regarding tower cranes may only be issued by L&I Crane Safety Inspectors.

B. **New and updated definitions.**

Reconfiguration.

Adding or subtracting components that alter the height (such as climbing a tower crane), length, or capacity of a crane/equipment. The setup of a crane is not considered reconfiguration.

Set Up.

Includes activities such as deploying and pinning outriggers, leveling the crane/equipment, extending or retracting telescoping boom sections, altering parts of line, or unfolding and pinning a boom or swing-away jib. These activities are not considered assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration.

Prime Contractor.

The person or entity that has overall responsibility for the construction of the project, its planning, quality, and completion, and serves as the site supervisor.

Note: The terms site supervisor and prime contractor have the same meaning in chapter 296-155 WAC, Part L.

C. **Updated tower crane requirements.**

Beginning January 1, 2026.

Prime contractors must obtain a tower crane permit prior to the operation, assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration of a tower crane. For tower cranes already in operation prior to January 1, 2026, prime contractors must apply for a permit by February 1, 2026.

If an unpermitted tower crane is identified after February 1, 2026, L&I staff must determine if the prime contractor has applied for a permit, and if they have not, L&I staff must inform the prime contractor that:

- No operation, assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration activities involving the tower crane may occur until a tower crane permit is

obtained. Should an employer refuse to cease crane activity, an Order of Immediate Restraint and Red Tag shall be issued.

- E They must follow the requirements found in WAC 296-155-53911 when applying for a tower crane permit.

Safety Conferences.

A safety conference must be conducted by L&I prior to issuing a tower crane permit. This may be attended remotely, at L&I's discretion. A list of required attendees, as well as individuals who must be invited, are outlined in WAC 296-155-53911(4)(a). This requirement does not prevent other participants from attending the safety conference.

Technical Representative.

WAC 296-155-53911(3)(e) requires certification from the prime contractor that a technical representative from the distributor or manufacturer will be present on-site to assure that the assembly, disassembly, and reconfiguration of a tower crane will be completed in accordance with either the manufacturer operation instructions and guidelines, or alternate plans/instructions approved by an RPE.

In the event it is infeasible for a technical representative of the distributor or manufacturer to be present, the prime contractor must make timely notification to L&I and receive confirmation to proceed. Examples of acceptable infeasibility include, but are not limited to, when a manufacturer has gone out of business, or a distributor that employs one technical representative with limited availability due to commitments to another job site.

Experience Documentation.

WAC 296-155-53911(3)(f) requires prime contractors to submit to L&I experience and qualification information for all employees directly involved in the operation, assembly, disassembly, or reconfiguration of the tower crane. Employees directly involved typically include, but are not limited to, the crane owner, crane user, prime contractor, lift director, crane operator, rigger, signal person, and A/D director.

If an employee directly involved in the permitted activities is added to the project after a permit is issued, the prime contractor must provide the experience and qualification documentation for that employee to L&I five working days prior to the employee performing any work. If unforeseen circumstances (e.g., an illness) prevent advance submission of the experience and qualification documentation five working days in advance, the prime contractor must notify L&I, and provide the applicable documentation, as soon as possible.

Deficiencies.

If a deficiency is identified that requires the tower crane to be taken out of service, the operation of the tower crane is restricted only to the functions necessary to:

- Perform repairs,

- Inspect the equipment, or
- Verify its repair and performance.

Beginning January 1, 2027.

A/D directors for tower cranes must be certified by a nationally accredited testing organization recognized by L&I.

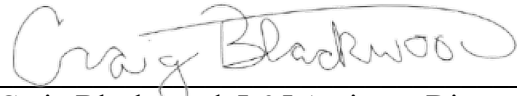
VI. Point of Contact

DOSH staff should contact the Region 8 Crane Compliance Manager for guidance.

VIII. Review and Cancellation

DOSH will review this Directive for applicability on an “as needed” basis, and it will remain effective until superseded or canceled.

Approved:



Craig Blackwood, L&I Assistant Director
Division of Occupational Safety and Health