

**THIRD PARTY INSPECTIONS
And HOW THEY WORK FOR YOU
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It has been stated that there can be a conflict of interest when it comes to manufacturers, repair companies and crane owners performing Annual Inspections on their own equipment. It also has been stated that there can be a conflict of interest anytime other services are offered beyond the inspection process. OSHA Maritime regulations also state that an Accredited Maritime inspector or Agency can not provide additional services of monetary value to equipment being inspected to prevent the perception of a conflict of interest. This works very well in the Maritime industry, endures in the Construction and General industries but becomes a bigger issue in the EOTC (Electric Overhead Traveling Cranes) market segment.

These markets have been identified in ascending order. There are relatively few Marine cranes compared to the total of all 3 groups. Restricted Third Party Inspection works very well in this group. Construction and General Industry Mobile Cranes are a larger percent of the population but still manageable in large part by Third Party Inspection. Major population centers with mid to large Mobile Cranes can certainly be covered by Third Party Inspection Agencies or Individuals. This group is not regulated and therefore, not held to the Maritime restriction for providing additional services. I maintain you may be qualified but you are not a Third Party Inspector/Inspection Agency if you do provide those services. HESCO adheres to the Maritime standard and does not provide those additional hands on services. EOTC'S are by far the largest group. They need to be dismantled during the inspection process and should be, for economy, serviced at the

same time for items such as brakes, gearing, limit switches, safety circuits and the like. The highly specialized EOTC'S (Nuclear, Aero-Space, etc.) also need dismantling and service but due the size and nature of use Third Party makes sense. Therefore, it is very difficult to separate the EOTC Annual Inspection from the Annual Services required. For this industry there is a vast network of highly trained engineers, electricians, electronic technicians and mechanics both on the Manufacturers and Dealers side of the responsibility to do the Annual Inspection and Annual Servicing of the cranes simultaneously.

All groups benefit from Third Party Inspections. CRANE OWNERS get credentials for their cranes that allow easy access to jobsites. They receive professional recommendations to solve problems such as cable selections and auxiliary gear. They learn about industry custom and practice that they do not get to see from their segment of the business. Their operators are more trusting of the equipment especially if they are new to the machine. Finally, it shows their insurance carrier they have a good crane safety program.

CRANE USERS are pleased because it shows the worthiness of the crane and reduces accident potential. It also means less energy and time is spent checking the crane into the site.

MANUFACTURERS and DEALERS also benefit. The machines that pass good Third Party Inspection perform at 100% of ability and brand name excellence is promoted. Furthermore, there is no stigma of promoting repair work for their shops. The inspection agency in effect orders the repairs or replacements for deficient items, not the dealer.

Now that we are all convinced that Third Party Crane Inspection is the best practice, how and where do I find competent crane inspection?

The problem of finding competent Third Party Crane Inspection is not new for owners. Many claim to be inspectors but few have real credentials. Federal OSHA will Accredite Maritime Inspectors and they do all the required Maritime Inspection and Testing. They are qualified and get audited by OSHA as they feel the need for such. These agencies and inspectors generally stay in their Maritime arena and take on some construction cranes as they have additional time. The State of California licenses Crane Inspectors via a testing program. The holder of such a license should also be a worthy inspector. The Crane Certification Association of America is a national association with approximately 125 member firms through the 50 States and Puerto Rico. They issue “Certified Crane Surveyor” cards (CCS) to members who pass the various tests for each type of crane [mobile-tower-overhead].

The above 3 groups are available by Federal Register listing, State of California listing and website www.ccaaweb.net. The two national groups give complete USA coverage and many of the California Inspectors cover more than just California.

The next tier of inspectors comes from schools that advertise 2 to 5 day programs in Mobile Crane Inspection & Certification. Some require 3 years experience in the field before they can enroll in their course. This type of program can take a seasoned service man or maintenance director and move him to the inspection side. Usually that person is an in-house inspector for a large firm. It would be best for a graduate of this kind of school to work for an existing inspection agency or firm to gather the experience needed while having a senior man confirm and critique his work.

Finally we have the self-appointed inspectors that do not belong to any of the aforementioned groups. They are somewhat enterprising to strike out on their own but without proper training, experience and oversight they are dangerous. Having been a mechanic or operator does not necessarily mean you are a qualified inspector. You need all of that knowledge along with a full understanding of the codes, standards, and regulations that govern the particular device you are inspecting. Unaffiliated inspectors lack the network to answer their own questions on unknown situations.

Choose wisely when entrusting the safety and reputation of your firm to an inspector.