



INFORMATION SHEET: FOCUS ON COMPLIANCE

Major inspection requirements for registered mobile cranes and tower cranes

Background

Inspection and maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements are critical for the safe operation of all cranes including registered mobile cranes and tower cranes.

Inspections range from pre-operational, routine, periodic third party and major inspections. This information sheet focuses on major inspection requirements of registered mobile cranes and tower cranes under the Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WHS General Regulations).

Major inspections are critical to the continued safe operation of cranes nearing or past their design life. Continued operation of these cranes without major inspections may increase the risk of catastrophic failure of the crane, exposing people near the crane to the risk of serious injuries or death.

Major inspection requirements under WHS laws

Under regulation 235 of the WHS General Regulations, major inspection means an examination of all critical components of the crane, if necessary by stripping down the crane and removing paint, grease and corrosion to allow a thorough examination of each critical component; and a check of the effective and safe operation of the crane.

A major inspection must be carried out by a competent person. Regulation 235 defines a competent person as:

- a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out a major inspection of the plant, and
- is eligible for professional engineer membership of Engineers Australia

or one who is determined by the regulator to be a competent person.

The person with management or control of a registered mobile crane or tower crane at a workplace must ensure that a major inspection of the crane is carried out by, or under the supervision of, a competent person:

- (a) at the end of the design life recommended by the manufacturer for the crane; or
- (b) if there are no manufacturer's recommendations, in accordance with the recommendations of a competent person; or
- (c) if it is not reasonably practicable to comply with (a) or (b), every 10 years from the date that the crane was first commissioned or first registered, whichever occurred first.

Refer to the Safe Work Australia [Guide to inspecting and maintaining cranes](#) for information on inspecting, testing, maintaining and repairing cranes in the workplace.

Carrying out major inspections

The person with management or control of a registered mobile crane or tower crane at a workplace must review the inspection and maintenance requirements for their cranes. If no end of design life or manufacturer's instructions are available, carry out the major inspections in accordance with the recommendations of the competent person. Ensure you get these recommendations in writing.

If it is not reasonably practicable to obtain the manufacturer's recommendations (for instance, if the manufacturer is overseas and is unable to provide such information) or to engage a competent person, carry out a major inspection every 10 years from the date that the crane was first commissioned or first registered, whichever occurs first.

The person with management or control of the plant at a workplace must keep a record of all tests, inspections, maintenance, commissioning, decommissioning, dismantling and alterations of the plant (r. 237). The record must be kept for the period that the plant is used or until the person relinquishes control of the plant. The person must make the record available to any person to whom the person relinquishes control of the plant.

If an altered design may affect health or safety, the altered design must be registered (r. 244). For tower cranes, this includes relocation.

Further information

Work Health and Safety Commission

- [Code of practice: Managing risks of plant in the workplace](#)

Safe Work Australia

- [General guide to cranes](#)
- [Guide to inspecting and maintaining cranes](#)
- [Guide to mobile cranes](#)
- [Guide to tower cranes](#)

Australian Standards

- AS 2550.1 *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use Part 1: General requirements*
- AS 2550.4 *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use Part 4: Tower cranes*
- AS 2550.5 *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use Part 5: Mobile cranes*
- AS 2550.20 *Cranes, hoists and winches – Safe use Part 20: Self-erecting tower cranes*