

As NYC Expands Crane Operator Licensing, Gorayeb & Associates Details the Rights of Workers Injured in Lifting Accidents

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More than half of fatal crane incidents nationally involve a worker struck by an object or equipment, federal data show, even as the city adds new licensing rules for smaller cranes and hoisting machines

Cranes killed an average of 42 workers a year in the United States from 2011 through 2017, and just over half of those deaths involved a worker struck

by an object or piece of equipment, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. [Gorayeb & Associates](#), the New York personal injury law firm founded in 1986 by Christopher J. [Gorayeb](#), is highlighting the legal rights of workers hurt in crane and hoisting accidents as New York City phases in new licensing requirements for the operators of smaller cranes and lifting machines.

"A crane accident is almost never the operator having a bad day," said Christopher J. Gorayeb, founding partner of Gorayeb & Associates. "It is a rigging shortcut, a lift plan nobody followed, a load nobody weighed, or a machine nobody inspected. When a load comes down on a man below, the people who controlled that lift are responsible, and in New York the law is built to hold them to it."

Federal data show where the danger concentrates. Roughly a third of crane related deaths struck workers in transportation and material moving jobs, more than half of them crane operators, while another 31 percent involved workers in construction and extraction trades, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found. The toll has fallen over time, from an average of 78 deaths a year between 1992 and 2010 to 42 a year between 2011 and 2017, a decline that tracked the rollout of the federal crane standard requiring operator certification and stricter inspection.

New York City has pushed in the same direction. In its 2024 Construction Safety Report, the Department of Buildings recorded 638 construction incidents and 482 worker injuries, both at or



Gorayeb & Associates, P.C.

near 10 year lows, and named new licensing requirements for operators of smaller crane devices and hoisting machines among the measures behind the improvement. The agency conducted 416,290 field inspections in 2024, the most on record.

"If a crane or a hoist hurts you, the case turns on evidence that disappears fast," Gorayeb said. "Get the make and model of the equipment, the name of the operator and the rigging company, and photographs before the site is cleared. Do not give a recorded statement to an insurance carrier first. A crane case usually involves the building owner, the contractor, the crane owner, the lessor, and sometimes the manufacturer, and a worker who signs away too early can lose claims worth far more than a quick offer."

Under New York Labor Law Sections 240(1) and 241(6), property owners and general contractors carry nondelegable duties to provide proper hoisting and safety equipment and to keep construction sites reasonably safe, and these protections apply regardless of a worker's immigration status.

Workers injured in crane, derrick, hoist, and rigging accidents may pursue multiple parties beyond a workers' compensation claim, including equipment owners, lessors, and manufacturers. The firm advises injured workers to seek immediate medical care, report the incident in writing the same day, and consult counsel before discussing it with any insurer.

About [Gorayeb & Associates, P.C.](#)

Founded in 1986 by Christopher J. Gorayeb, Gorayeb & Associates, P.C. is a New York personal injury law firm focused on construction accidents, workplace injury, and occupational disease. The firm has recovered more than \$2 billion in verdicts and settlements for over 12,000 injured workers and is widely recognized among the New York Latino workforce as "The People's Lawyers" for its bilingual representation, contingency fee structure, and 40 year track record of holding employers, property owners, and manufacturers accountable under New York Labor Law, the Workers' Compensation Law, and the Estates, Powers and Trusts Law. Learn more at www.gorayeb.com.

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