

From Consultation to Installation

If you've determined that your business can benefit from the installation of a new overhead crane system, then you're probably in the beginning stages of researching companies who make or build overhead cranes.



An overhead crane is a complex and expensive piece of equipment. Prior to financing an overhead crane, your bank may want you to meet with a couple of different overhead crane manufacturers to receive multiple quotes on the installation of an overhead crane system. Even if you aren't financing your new crane equipment, it's still a good idea to bring in a couple of different overhead crane companies to look at your facility and provide a scope of work and provide their expert opinion on the right overhead crane for your business' needs.

The goal of this section is to help you understand what you can expect from an overhead crane consultation and walk you through the process from first contact with a crane manufacturer up into the installation of the overhead crane system.

First Contact with a Crane Manufacturer

So, you've done your research, and you're ready to take the next steps and bring in a couple of different overhead crane builders to come to your facility and bid on the project. If you filled out a contact form on an overhead crane manufacturers' website, then a salesperson will reach out via email or telephone to establish contact and introduce themselves.



During this brief email or telephone conversation, the following will occur:

- They'll introduce themselves and their company and discuss their capabilities
- Learn a little bit about who you are and what you do
- Learn about who your company is and what your business does
- Learn about the different types of industries you serve
- Learn more about your current lifting or material handling capabilities and ask about any problems, or inefficiencies, that you're currently experiencing

What they're trying to do is build a customer profile with some base-level information, so that they can get you set up in their system and understand how they can best help you solve your lifting problems.

The next step will be to schedule a time and day for them to visit your facility. They'll typically want to schedule a time to come out when production is up and running—so, don't worry about scheduling a consultation on the weekends or during off-hours.

It's actually more beneficial to the overhead crane sales team to see what equipment is currently in use, see how it operates, and see where it's located in the building. This helps them to understand how they might fit a new crane system into your building's existing infrastructure and cause as little disruption to your existing processes as possible.

What Happens During a Crane Consultation

Prior to scheduling a consultation with an overhead crane builder, make sure that you let them know if any of the following applies to your overhead crane installation project:

- Is there any specialized safety training required for a third-party to enter your facility? Will there be any type of drug screening required before they can come on-site?

- Will they need to provide their own personal fall protection or personal protective equipment (PPE), or is there any special PPE required to gain access to your facility (hard hats, steel toe shoes, Kevlar sleeves, heat or fire resistant clothing, etc.)?
- Is this a new construction project or will the crane be installed into an existing structure? If it is a new construction project, they may only need to see the prints for the new construction to provide a quote or bid on the project.



By covering this information ahead of time, a crane manufacturer can make sure that they arrive before your scheduled meeting time to complete any mandatory safety training or drug testing. It will also ensure that they come prepared with the proper protective equipment and understand the general layout and environment of your building or facility.

Most often, these types of meetings are scheduled with your company's Maintenance Manager or Production Manager and can last between 30 minutes to an hour. When the sales representative arrives, they'll want to get right out to the production floor to get a quick tour of your facility, see how your production processes currently work, and get an understanding of the building's floor space, support structures in place, and the size of the crane that they will be building.

During their time with you, they'll be asking you a number of different questions—most likely filling out a form or spreadsheet with specifications, measurements, and observations. Some of the necessary information that they're gathering to provide a quote can include:

- A description of the lifting application and the environment
 - Will the crane be installed indoors or outdoors?
 - Are there any environmental factors like a chemical or hot metal environment?
 - Are there any noted obstructions that may hinder access during installation?
- Existing cranes in facility—quantity, brands, capacities of existing equipment
- Total number of cranes needing to be installed
- Crane capacity / max hoist capacity
- Number of picks, or lifts, per hour
- What percentage of lifts will be at capacity?
- Span, or length, of crane and runway system
 - Will this be a new runway system, or can they utilize existing support structures?
 - What is the distance needed between columns?
 - Will the runway be ceiling mounted?

- Can it be mounted to building columns or can it be tied back to the building?
- Hook height / total lift height required
- Power supply (480V, 230V, etc.)
- Radio controls – yes / no?

Other optional information that they may gather can include customer preferences on speed of the bridge, trolley, and hoist, and any preferences on upgrades or modernizations like walkways, cabs, variable speed controls, or anti-collision technologies.

It may be beneficial to have some of your shop employees speak with the sales rep during their walkthrough. Your employees are the most knowledgeable about the jobs or tasks that they perform, and how they do them. They can provide additional insight into how their job's efficiency and production can be improved with the installation of an overhead crane system.

The sales rep will also take some general measurements and may sketch out some quick drawings of the building layout, or take pictures to take back with them to their office. Typically, they're looking to provide visual or written documentation of the following items:

- The space or area of where the crane is going
- Any obstacles that need to be worked around
- Distance and access to the building from where the crane will be installed
- Floor clearance and overhead clearance
- The area where the girders will be taken from the floor to the crane level

If the salesperson can provide as much detail as possible to their team of estimators and engineers, then they can ensure that their team has a full understanding of the project and they can spec out and design a crane that is suitable for your unique building and lifting requirements.

Once the salesperson has gathered all of the information needed to design an overhead crane system for your facility, they'll head back to regroup with their team and begin the quotation process for your crane installation project.

What Happens After a Crane Consultation?

Overhead crane manufacturers will typically have their sales reps, engineers, estimators, and project managers all involved in the quotation process. They'll review the notes or worksheet completed by the salesperson, any prints or drawings provided by the customer, and any sketches or pictures taken during the site assessment. From there, they'll begin filling in the blanks and putting an estimate together of how much the project will cost.

Turnaround Time for an Overhead Crane Quote

There are all different types of overhead cranes, and the turnaround time of the quote can vary depending on the type of crane, complexity of the crane's design, and what service classification it falls under.



Simpler cranes like jib cranes and workstation cranes have a quick turnaround time—manufacturers can typically turn a quote around for a jib or workstation crane in 1-3 business days.

A simple modular crane with a base trolley, hoist, and bridge design may take 5-7 business days to produce a quote.

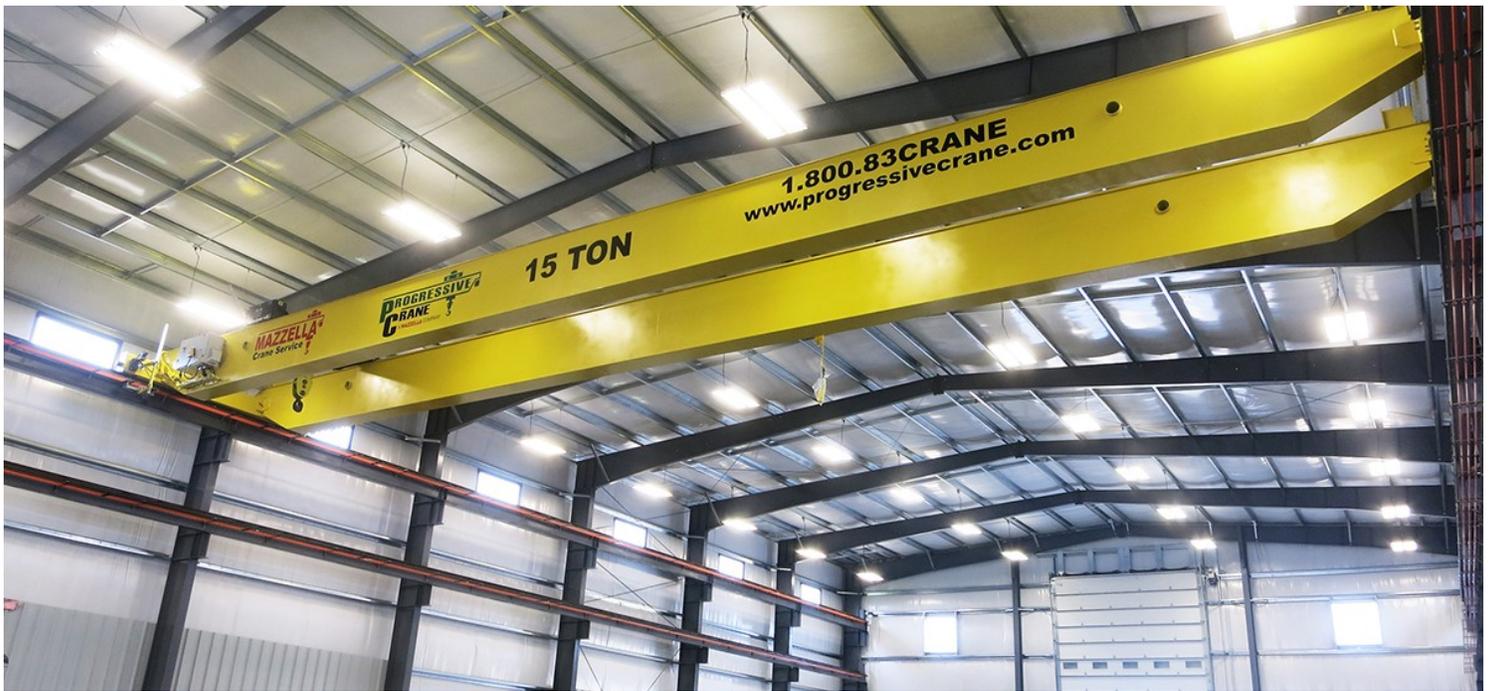
A quote for specially-designed cranes, or cranes with extra engineering built-in, can take 10-14 business days, or even a month, to produce for projects with a large number of cranes or distinct characteristics.

The reason for this is that the design of the crane is more complex—meaning that the engineering team may need extra time to develop a solution to a lifting challenge, or they may need extra time to contact vendors and receive pricing or specifications for specific crane parts and components. If the manufacturer does not do the overhead crane installation themselves, they may also need time to sub-contract an installer and get an estimate from them as well.

What's Included in an Overhead Crane Quote

A quote for an overhead crane includes the price for the full scope of the project—including all costs relating to:

- Project management
- Engineering and design of the overhead crane system to meet customer specifications and ASME guidelines
- Sourcing of all overhead crane parts and components
- Design and manufacturing of new overhead runway systems (if runways don't exist or existing runways can't be utilized)
- Any disassembly and removal of existing overhead crane systems
- Installation of new overhead crane system and load test at time of electrical start-up
- Time frame / lead time to complete the project
- Payment terms



Additional charges related to tax, freight, and any fees associated with obtaining permits may or may not be built into the quote, so make sure that you clarify whether there are any additional costs that are not included in the quote.

You'll also want to make sure that you clearly understand the crane builder's payment terms, including any money or deposit required upfront, and also what project milestones will require additional payment along the way.

Selecting an Overhead Crane Manufacturer to Partner With

Once you've received a satisfactory number of quotes from overhead crane builders, the next step is to compare the quotes and select the company that you feel most comfortable with.



Remember, price shouldn't be the only determining factor when selecting an overhead crane company to partner with. An overhead crane system is a complex and critical piece of equipment used to improve your business' efficiencies and production flows and you should only partner with a company that you truly feel comfortable with.

When reviewing overhead crane quotes, consider the following:

- Did the company or salesperson take the time to explain the quote and walk you through it to make sure that you understand and are comfortable with the breakdown of costs?
- Did they quote the project to your exact specifications? Make sure that any specific details or requirements that you provided them during your consultation are addressed in the quote.
- Have they committed to meet your project's specific deadline / time frame?
- Ask for references and contact them to ask the following questions:
 - Were they happy with their partnership?
 - Were they happy with the quality of work?
 - Did the project stay on track and within budget?
 - Did the manufacturer meet agreed upon specifications?

Once you've selected who you want to partner with, you can reach out to them and let them know that you want to work with them moving forward. They may have to schedule another meeting so that you can meet more members of their team and they can meet additional members of your team. You'll review and finalize the scope of the project and then they will provide you with an agreement that will be signed—binding both parties to the agreements within.

From there, the crane manufacturer will provide you with any approval drawings and/or calculations. Depending on the magnitude of the project, approval drawings can take 1-3 weeks to complete. Once authorized signatures are provided on the drawing they will begin sourcing all of the crane components and constructing the crane(s).

If the manufacturer isn't doing the installation, or is receiving assistance from a third-party during the installation, they'll typically schedule an appointment prior to the scheduled date to come out and look at your facility. This helps to ensure that all parties can view the area where the crane will be installed, identify any obstructions that may require special equipment for installation, and familiarize themselves with the facility so that there aren't any surprises when they show up to do the installation.

Cost of a New Overhead Crane

If you're just starting your research, we understand that the process of buying and installing an overhead crane in your facility can seem somewhat overwhelming. You may be moving into a new building, replacing an old or outdated piece of equipment, or may be buying an overhead crane for the first time and are looking to expand your business' material handling capabilities.

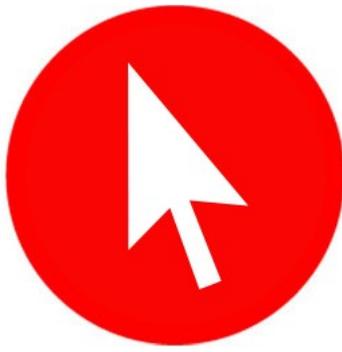


In this section, we'll discuss the factors that affect the cost of any type of crane, and then we'll dive into the prices of common types, sizes, and configurations of overhead cranes.

What Affects the Price of an Overhead Crane?

To make sure that you get the right type of overhead crane for your business, you should be ready to address the following information when you contact an overhead crane manufacturer to bid on your project:

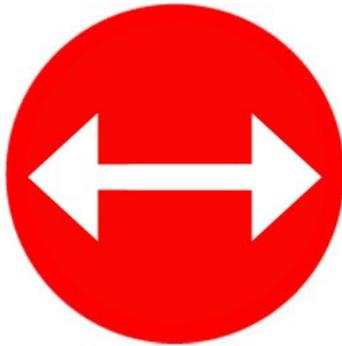
- The type of crane you need
- The span you need to cover under the crane, or horizontal distance center-to-center of the runway rails
- The capacity, or maximum rated load, that you need your crane to lift
- The estimated height of your crane, or required lift
- How fast the crane will need to be
- How often you will use your crane
- The environment that your crane will be operating in
- If you need a runway, the length of your bay that the crane will need to traverse
- Any special building or structural requirements for operation or installation



What Type of Overhead Crane Do You Need?

An overhead crane is a complex piece of equipment, and there are many different types of overhead cranes to choose from. The complexity of the overhead crane components required to operate the crane, the engineering required to design the crane, and the application (industry or materials being lifted) will determine what type of crane you will need.

For example, an 80 foot, 20-ton double girder bridge crane will cost significantly more than a 40 foot, 10-ton double girder bridge crane.



What is the Span of the Overhead Crane?

The span, or distance between the runway rails, is one of the biggest contributing factors to the cost of an overhead crane. The longer the crane's span, the more material is required to build the crane girders. This added material increases the crane's weight, which will also increase the cost of the runway, if required.



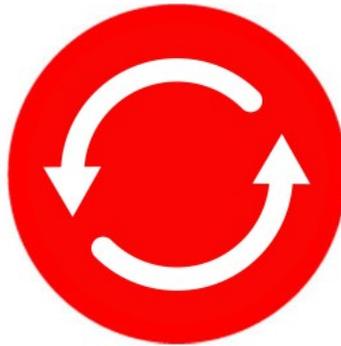
What is the Capacity or Maximum Rated Load?

An overhead crane's capacity is the maximum load which may be applied to the crane in a particular working configuration, and under a particular condition of use.

When the manufacturer comes on-site to provide a consultation, they can calculate the capacity based on their understanding of:

- The size and weight of the material that you'll be lifting
- Below-the-hook lifting devices that may need to be used
- Single hoist or double hoist configuration
- Any other considerations for future crane usage or capabilities

A crane that requires a large capacity, a large span, or severe service classification, may require a double girder design—meaning there are two beams that make up the bridge. These girders can be designed in a rigid welded steel box girder design for added reinforcement. This type of setup will be the most expensive, as there are significant increases in labor and material charges to weld and fabricate the girders.



What is the Duty Cycle or Service Classification?

There are six different classifications of overhead cranes, specified by the Crane Manufacturers Association of America (CMAA).

An overhead crane manufacturer will determine what type of crane classification they'll need to build for your specific lifting application, using the following criteria:

- How frequently will the crane be used?
- How quickly will the crane need to transfer equipment or materials?
- How many lifts per hour will the crane need to perform?
- Will the crane be needed for regular or frequent service?
- How far does the crane need to move material in your facility?
- What is the average rated load of the materials that will be moving?
- How often will the crane be making lifts at full capacity?
- In what type of environment will the crane be operating?

Class A and Class B cranes will be your least expensive option because they'll be used mostly for maintenance or the initial installation of equipment. They're used infrequently, and there are long periods of idle time between lifts.

Class C cranes will be a middle-of-the-road type crane. There may be some additional engineering built-in to the project for a specific need, but they typically utilize a basic hoist, trolley, and bridge design. They're used moderately to handle loads at or around 50% capacity and are in service for about 5 to 10 lifts per hour.

Class D and Class E cranes, often referred to as process cranes, are built for a specific need and are more heavy-duty. They may be constantly running in excess of 50% of the rated capacity, and they're making 15 or more lifts per hour.

They have more engineering or customized solutions built into the design for the specific lifting application—which increases initial design and engineering costs for the project.

Class F cranes must be capable of handling loads approaching rated capacity continuously, under severe service conditions, throughout their lifetime. They'll be extremely expensive due to additional costs related to design and engineering, sourcing of heavy-duty components, materials and labor, and installation.



What is the Operating Environment?

A severe, obstructed, or dangerous operating environment where the crane will be installed and running, will affect the cost of an overhead crane in several different ways.

Environmental factors such as high heat, the presence of chemicals or fumes, steam, dust, or excess moisture can require special metal coatings to protect and enhance the operating life of the crane. The individual components of the crane will also need to be sourced to ensure that they can hold up and withstand the operating environment.

Facilities like wastewater treatment plants, fertilizer plants, and oil and gas processing facilities require explosion proof cranes. This means that the equipment cannot generate any type of spark. These types of cranes can utilize a specific pneumatic air-powered system, or a specially-designed electrical system to make them explosion proof—however, these can be expensive to design and install.

Cranes that will be used outdoors will need additional protective coatings to prevent corrosion and will require weatherproofing to seal out moisture and dust or dirt. Stainless steel or galvanized components will also need to be sourced to ensure that they can handle exposure to the elements and don't rust.

A dangerous operating environment will also require special equipment and protection (PPE) for the installers during installation. Any obstructions to the installation area can add to the cost if the installers don't have clear access to the area to remove an existing structure or install a new one.



What is the Length of the Runway?

The runway length is the largest contributor to the runway cost itself. This length can also play into the cost of the crane. If you need to make multiple picks per hour and have a long runway, then you may need a faster trolley and hoist to move up and down the runway quickly. The additional speed may require the components of the crane to be sized to a higher capacity.

A faster crane that travels the length of the building may also require the operator to work from within an exposed or enclosed cab—which is more expensive than radio or pendant controls.



What are the Building or Structural Requirements for Operation or Installation?

If an overhead crane is being installed in a new construction facility, then typically the runway beams will be installed during the construction process, and the crane manufacturer won't need to include the runway structure in the quotation process. Care must be taken with your construction contractor, as crane runway tolerances are much tighter than standard construction codes. Repairing a runway that is out of tolerance can add significant cost to the installation.

If a crane is being retrofit into an existing building, there will be added costs for the design, fabrication, delivery, and installation of the crane's runway system.

Most crane manufacturers don't offer in-house structural repair or certification services, so you'll also have to consider any additional costs related to having concrete contractors or structural engineers provide a consultation of your facility.

They'll need to determine if the existing building structure and foundation can handle the additional loads generated by the installation of an overhead crane system.

What is the Cost of an Overhead Crane?

Once you've gone through the consultation process, a group of estimators, engineers, draftsmen, and project managers all get together and begin putting together a comprehensive proposal.

The quotation process can take anywhere from 3-30 business days depending on the number of cranes being quoted, the complexity of the project, and the sourcing of crane components. Once they've completed this process, they'll get back in touch with you to submit their official bid for the project.

Now that you have an understanding of all of the different considerations and factors involved in determining the cost of an overhead crane, here's what you can expect to pay, on average, for the most common sizes and configurations of overhead cranes.

NOTE: These prices DO NOT include installation costs, unless otherwise specified.

Bridge Crane: \$25,000 - \$30,000



- 5-ton capacity
- Span of 40 feet or less
- Base design trolley, hoist, and bridge

Portable Gantry Crane: \$6,000



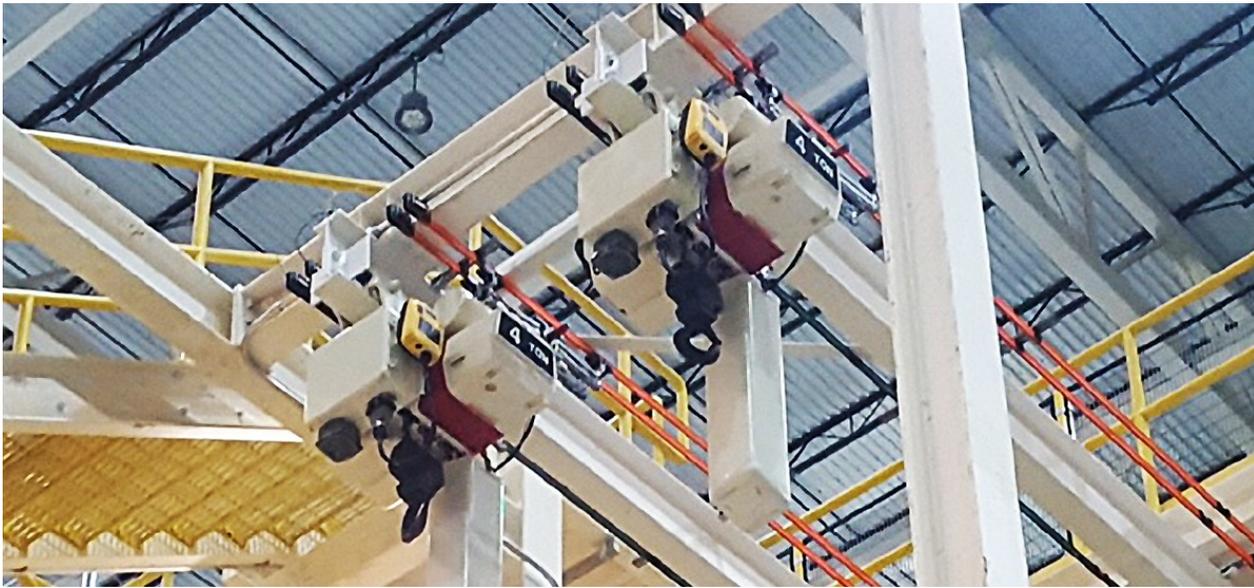
- Capacities from 1-ton to 5-ton
- Spans from 8 feet to 30 feet
- Heights under boom from 10 feet to 20 feet

Engineered Gantry Crane: \$70,000 - \$80,000



- 5-ton capacity
- 40-foot span
- Includes hoist
- Typically 1.5 to 2 times the cost of an equivalent bridge crane
- Hoist, trolley, railway included
- Can be single-leg or double-leg design

Monorail Crane: \$10,000



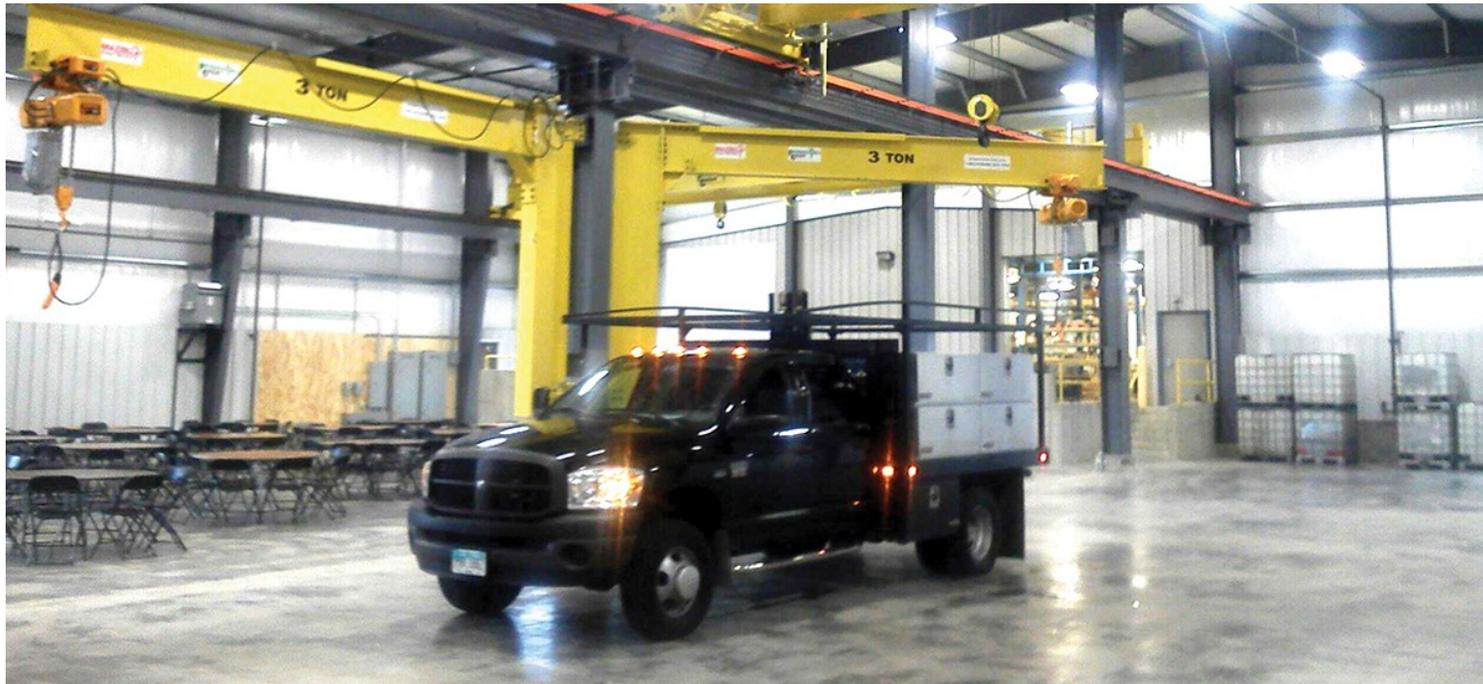
- 2-ton capacity
- 20-foot span
- Includes hoist
- Cost is most dependent on length of the track, and support structure: Will it be floor mounted or hung from ceiling?

Workstation Crane: Anywhere from \$2,000 - \$80,000



- Capacities from 150 lbs. to 2-tons
- Coverage with up to 34-foot bridge span and 124-foot runway
- Up to 17 feet high clearance for free-standing design
- Free-standing or ceiling-mounted can affect price
- Wide price range is very dependent on span and length of runways

Jib Crane: Anywhere from \$500 - \$25,000



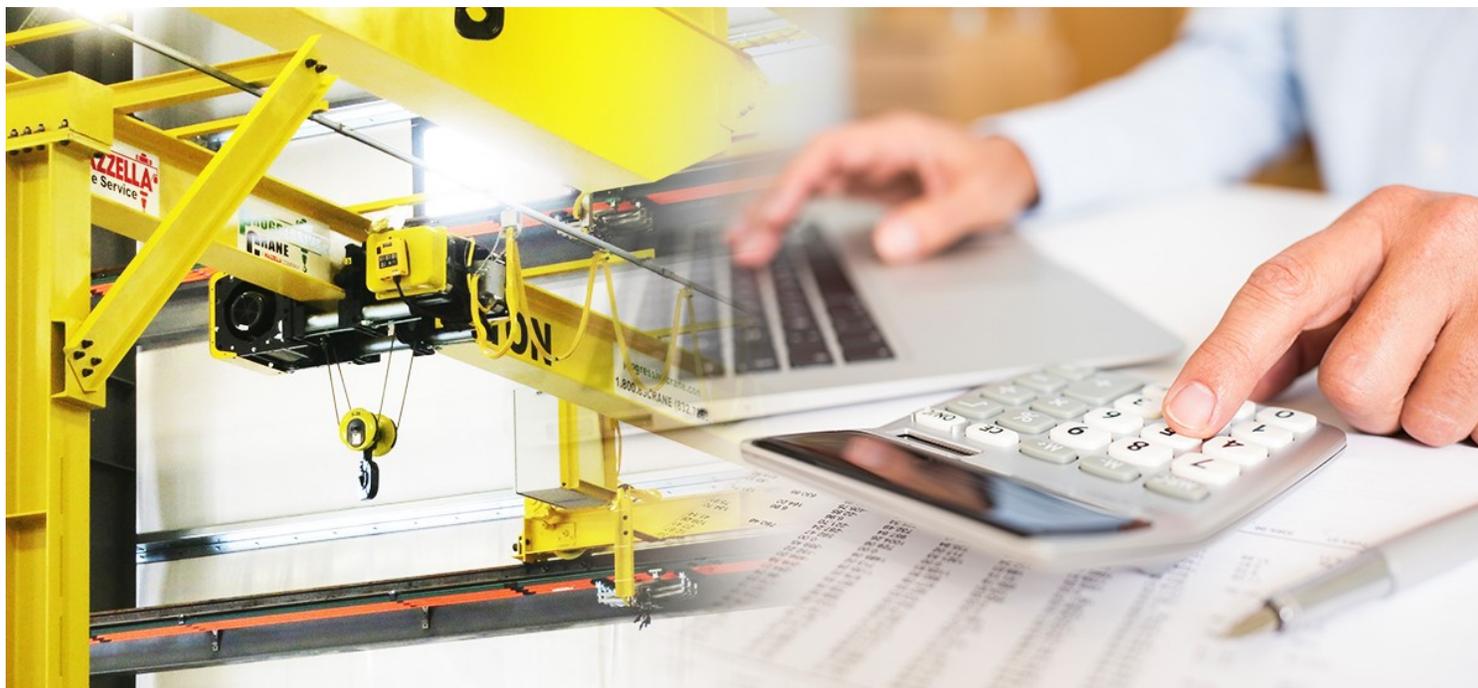
- Capacities from 150 lbs. to 5-tons
- 4-foot to 30-foot spans
- Height under boom from 8 feet to 30 feet
- There are many different types of jib cranes, including:
 - Free-standing
 - Workstation (typically lighter capacity)
 - Structural (can be designed up to 10-ton capacity)
- Do you need a motorized crane, or will it be manually-powered?
- What is the degree of rotation required?

As you can see, there are so many different factors that can affect the price that you'll pay for an overhead crane system. The two most important aspects are span and capacity. These will determine how much labor and material will be required for the project, and will also dictate the complexity and design of the hoist, trolley, bridge, controls, and power system—all major players in how much a crane will cost you.

Remember, these aren't necessarily base-level prices, but instead are prices or ranges that we've seen for the most common configurations of each type of crane. The type of crane, the span, the capacity, the duty cycle, operating environment, and any additional building or structural considerations can all add to or lessen the cost of an overhead crane.

As you can start to see, investing in an overhead crane system can be one of the most useful and utilized pieces of equipment you can add to your business to increase production, workflows, and bring in more profit. However, paying the full amount of money upfront for an overhead crane can be a significant investment that may seem out of reach for many small to mid-sized business owners.

Buying vs. Financing Crane Equipment



One of the concerns that many of our customers have is how to pay for the crane equipment that they know will increase their productivity and save them money in the long run.

In this section, we're only going to discuss securing a loan from a lender to purchase a new overhead crane system. Typically, an overhead crane would not be a piece of equipment that would be leased because the installation of an overhead crane is a semi-permanent to permanent operation tied into the structure of the building. Removing and replacing the crane every couple of years would not be a feasible option for most businesses.



Improve Cash Flow

When you finance an overhead crane system, you don't have a significant amount of cash tied up in your equipment. You're free to use your available cash for other investments that will help to grow or improve your business, produce revenue and income, and ensure that the crane system that you purchase improves your efficiency and earns more profit.



Include "Soft Costs" in Your Financing

Many lenders will allow you to roll in and include 100% financing for other “soft costs” associated with the cost of an overhead crane, including things like:

- User or operator training
- Freight and delivery
- Any modifications or additions to building structure
- Installation costs
- Equipment maintenance or service agreements

By rolling in allotments for these added expenses, you can ensure that you’ll have the money to cover them, and their associated costs won’t disrupt your cash flow.



Preserve Other Lines of Credit

Financing your overhead crane system leaves other credit options available from your bank or other sources to take advantage of future opportunities to invest in the growth and development of your business.



Flexible Financing

A business' income tends to see ups and downs over the course of a year. Some lenders will customize a lending plan unique for their customer's business that's built around their needs and sets them up for success.

This can include a combination of options including varying monthly payments to match seasonal ebbs and flows in revenue, as well as varying payments based on accounting and tax schedules.

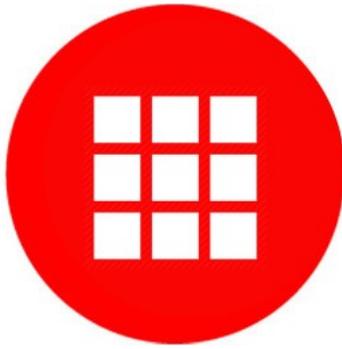


Stabilize Monthly Expenditures

By setting a fixed or variable monthly payment, you set yourself up for more accurate budgets and forecasts because you know exactly how much you'll be paying towards your overhead crane loan each month.

This also gives you a better understanding of what you can and cannot afford when it comes to growing your business, including:

- Payroll and hiring decisions
- Overhead and operating expenses
- Inventory and material costs
- Acquiring or upgrading additional equipment
- Marketing and sales support



More Equipment Options Available to You

Because you aren't absorbing the full cost of the overhead crane system upfront, financing allows you to truly select the right crane for your business.

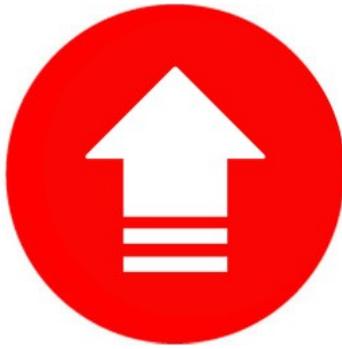
Instead of making cost-based decisions like going with a lower capacity crane, or selecting a crane design that's not ideal for your facility, you can select the right type of crane for your business needs.

Because the monthly payment is a small portion of the total cost of the equipment, financing allows a greater amount of equipment for a given dollar allocation. This means you may be able to plan more for the future and select a higher-end crane system that allows room for your business to grow into its full capabilities and capacities.



Benefit from Inflation

If your business does well due to inflation and you begin to see an increase in profits and revenue, you can actually benefit from inflation. For a fixed-term payment, if you already owed the money before inflation occurred, the inflation actually benefits the borrower. Because you now have more money available to you, and your payment is still the same, this can result in less interest for the lender if you use the extra money to pay off the loan early.



Upgrade or Modernize Other Crane Equipment You Own

While leasing allows you to temporarily use a piece of heavy-duty equipment, leasing an overhead crane doesn't make as much sense because you're installing a fairly permanent piece of equipment into the actual support structure of your facility.

An advantage to owning an overhead crane system is that you can always upgrade or modernize the components of your crane to extend the investment in the equipment, should your production or material handling needs change down the road.

Older cranes can be improved to a higher level of productivity and safety through a modernization upgrade and refurbishment program, including upgrades to:

- New and more efficient hoists and drives
- Increased capacity
- Add or upgrade speed and motion controls
- Cab to pendant conversions
- Infrared and radio remote controls
- Electrification systems
- Major mechanical components



Competitive Rates

Most lenders will require you to get multiple quotes before providing a loan for an overhead crane or another piece of heavy-duty equipment. The reason for this is that it provides a more complete price range for the project and also identifies any outliers.

However, you can also do your due diligence and solicit multiple offers from different lenders to find the best loan for your business. By contacting multiple lenders, you can select a lender to partner with based on the following criteria:

- Most competitive interest rates
- Terms
- Willingness to provide flexible or varying payments
- “Soft costs” that can be included in the loan?



Pay Off Crane Equipment Early With No Penalties

By financing your crane equipment through a loan, you receive ownership of the crane from the start and pay back the cost to the lender each month. The nice thing about financing is that most banks loan out the money without prepayment penalties.

So, if you're able to pay off the loan before the agreed-upon terms, it won't cost you anything extra and will save you a significant amount of money in interest payments. In comparison, leases are for a fixed period of time and are set up so that you owe payment during the entire course of the lease terms.

Wrapping it up

Installing an overhead crane in your facility is a big monetary investment. However, it's also an investment in your employees' safety, as well as an investment in improving the efficiency of your production and workflow processes.

If you've been researching the right type of crane for your business, then you know that the cost of an overhead crane can add up quickly based on the span, capacity, and any other specialized engineering or custom specifications required for your lifting needs.

The good news is that with a quick Google search, you can see that there are hundreds of companies who specialize in financing heavy-duty equipment and machinery for all sizes and types of businesses.

By acquiring a loan for the cost of your overhead crane system, you can add the technology that you need today without dropping a large sum of cash and potentially jeopardizing your business' future earnings and investment opportunities. Instead, you'll have a predictable monthly payment that will allow you to accurately budget and forecast. This gives you the freedom to make other investments that will grow your business, produce revenue and income, and ensure future profits.

How to Compare Quotes

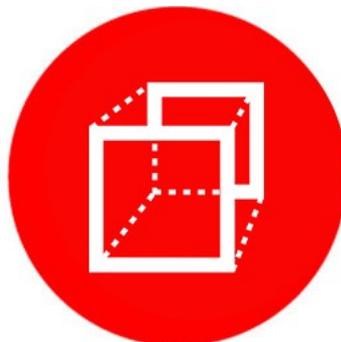
Price shouldn't be the only factor when selecting an overhead crane company to partner with. Read on to get a comprehensive understanding of an overhead crane quote and what criteria you should use to compare multiple quotes.



Partnering with an overhead crane manufacturer is a big decision and one that should not be taken lightly. The design, manufacturing, and installation of an overhead crane system is an enormous investment, but a necessary one if you want to improve your company's efficiency and workflows.

Get Multiple Quotes for Overhead Crane Installation

If you're looking to finance your overhead crane equipment, then your bank may require you to have at least three overhead crane manufacturers bid on the project. Even if you know you won't be financing the equipment, you should do your due diligence and have a couple of different crane companies look at your facility, provide a scope of work, and provide their expert opinion on the right overhead crane for your business.



Gain Perspective

Getting a couple of fresh sets of eyes on the project will help provide different options and opinions on the project. Each overhead crane builder may have a different idea or approach to go about solving your lifting and material handling challenges.

For example, one company may identify a potential problem or issue that another company overlooked. Or, if you have existing cranes in your facility, one company may want to completely replace them with new units, while another company may have a strategy for upgrading or modernizing your existing equipment at a significant cost-savings to your business.



Keep Costs Competitive

By having multiple manufacturers bid on your project, you will get a better sense of the true cost of buying and installing an overhead crane. Also, if a company knows that they aren't the only ones bidding on the project, they will tend to provide a more comprehensive and competitive estimate and may be more willing to negotiate on the final purchase price to get your business.



Finding Overhead Crane Manufacturers to Bid on Your Project

It's important to find the right company to partner with for your overhead crane project. There are a couple of different resources that you can use to research overhead crane manufacturers including referrals, industry events or trade shows, and utilizing the internet for research.



Ask for Referrals

Utilize industry connections to find out if other companies you know or work with have an overhead crane on-site. Reach out to current customers, vendors, or suppliers and find out if they utilize overhead lifting devices. If so, find out who they worked with, if they were happy with the partnership, and ask them if they'd be willing to provide a contact or make an introduction on your behalf.



Attend Industry Trade Shows or Events

You may luck out and find out that an overhead crane company that specializes in lifting equipment is already scheduled to exhibit at an industry show you'll be attending.

Take a few minutes to visit the trade show's website prior to the event and look at the list of exhibitors. See if there are any companies you'd be interested in speaking with—you may be able to contact them and schedule a quick introduction or consultation during the event.

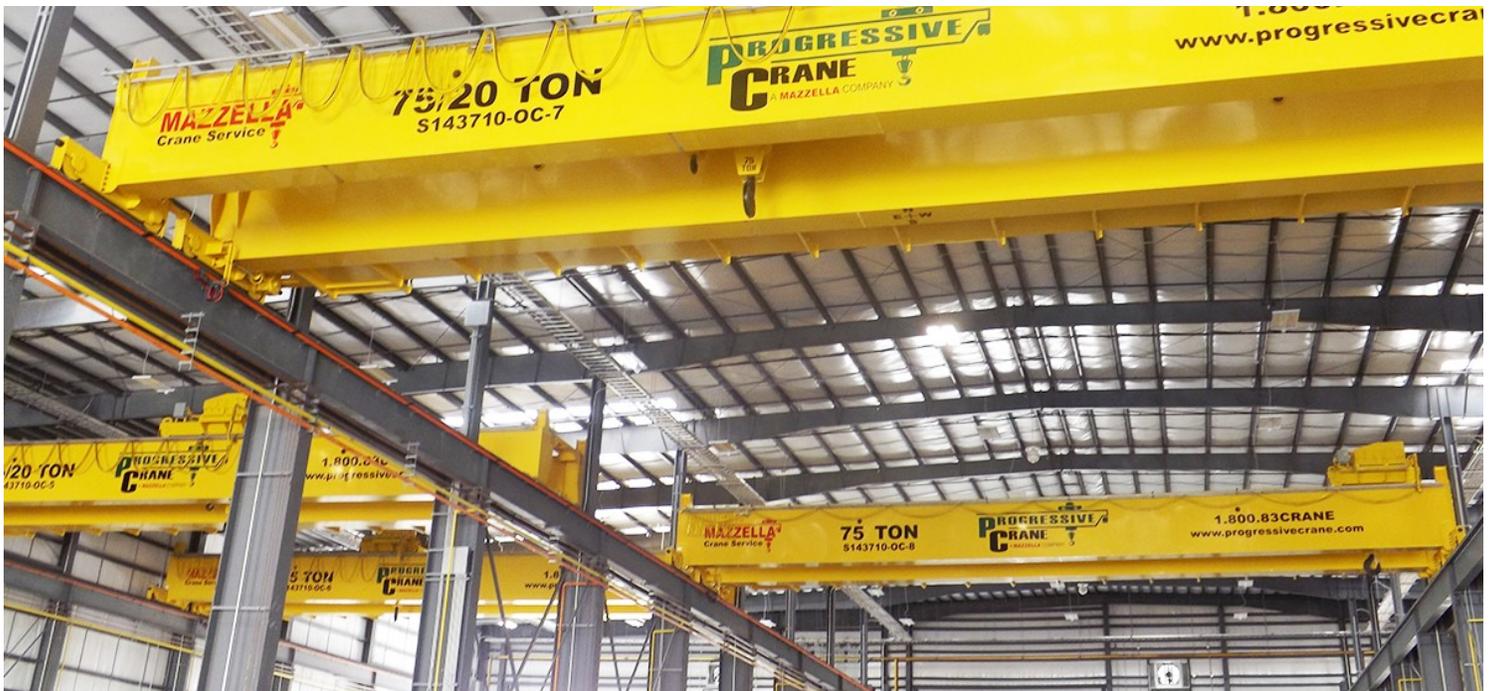


Do Your Research Online

Use Google or other search engines to find local crane manufacturers that you might be able to work with. You may want to use search terms like, “overhead crane companies Cleveland OH,” or “overhead crane builders Charlotte NC.” Adding in a qualifier, like the city or state that you’re located in, will help to return companies that are located nearby. This could result in significant cost-savings to coordinate travel and freight when it comes time for the installation.

What Factors Affect the Cost of a Crane?

When a crane manufacturer comes on-site for a consultation, they’ll try to identify your specific lifting challenges, as well as evaluate your facility to get an understanding of the building’s floor space, support structures in place, and the size and capacity of the crane that they’ll be building.



Prior to their individual visits, it may help to put together some notes or a cheat sheet about your overhead lifting project. This will remind you to ask each company the same questions and also to provide them with the same specifications for your project so that each company builds their quote off of the same information.

Each of the following specifications will affect the cost of an overhead crane's design and installation:

Total Number of Cranes

How many cranes will need to be designed, built, and installed?

Capacity

The capacity is the maximum load which may be applied to the crane, the hoist, or below-the-hook lifting device, in a particular working configuration and under a particular condition of use.

A crane's capacity is a variable that takes many different factors into consideration and can best be calculated by the crane manufacturer. They can determine capacity based on their understanding of:

- The weight of the material that you'll be lifting
- The rigging or below-the-hook lifters that will be attached
- Any other considerations for future usage or capabilities

Lift

Lift is how high into the air your material needs to be raised. When a team is calculating the lift capabilities of a crane, the following is taken into consideration:

- The height of any machinery or equipment on the floor that needs to be cleared
- The height of any racks or shelves that the material needs to be placed on
- The height or elevation of any pits, mines, or excavation sites that material will be lifted out of
- Overhead obstructions that can limit the hook height
- Elevation of an existing runway

Number of Lifts Per Hour

What is the duty cycle of this crane? Will it be making 2-5 lifts per hour at only 50% of its rated capacity? Or, will it be making 10-20 lifts per hours at, or near capacity, each time? Cranes in higher service classifications will require additional engineering and specialized components to solve complex lifting challenges.

Hook Approach

This is how close the crane hook can get to the end of a bridge or runway and considerations for the trolley hook approach, as well as the crane / runway hook approach. An under running crane will have a better trolley hook approach than a top running crane, so that may be a consideration if your crane needs to pick, or place, material near the walls or support structure within your facility.

Power

Will the crane be powered by electricity, hand-powered, or air-powered (pneumatic)?

Operating Environment

A severe, obstructed, or dangerous operating environment will affect the cost of an overhead crane. Environmental factors such as high heat, the presence of chemicals or fumes, steam, dust, or excess moisture can require special metal coatings to protect and enhance the operating life of the crane. It can also require special equipment or protection (PPE) for the installers during installation.

Obstructions can affect the cost of an overhead crane if the installers don't have clear access to the area to remove an existing structure, or install a new one.

Operating Speed

The faster that the crane needs to operate, the more it will cost to design, source, and configure the individual crane components. A process crane making 10-20 lifts per hour will need a faster bridge, trolley, and hoist compared to a maintenance crane that requires more precision and slower speeds.

Controls

Considerations will have to be made as to how the operator is loading or unloading material:

- A radio control gives the operator free range to move around to position and adjust the load prior to raising or releasing it.
- A pendant can be festooned along the bridge of the crane, or be fixed to move with the hoist and trolley.
- Faster cranes and cranes that travel the length of the building, may require the operator to work from within an exposed or enclosed cab.

Span

The horizontal distance center-to-center of the runway rails. Cranes with large spans will be more expensive than smaller-span cranes due to the need for engineered girders.

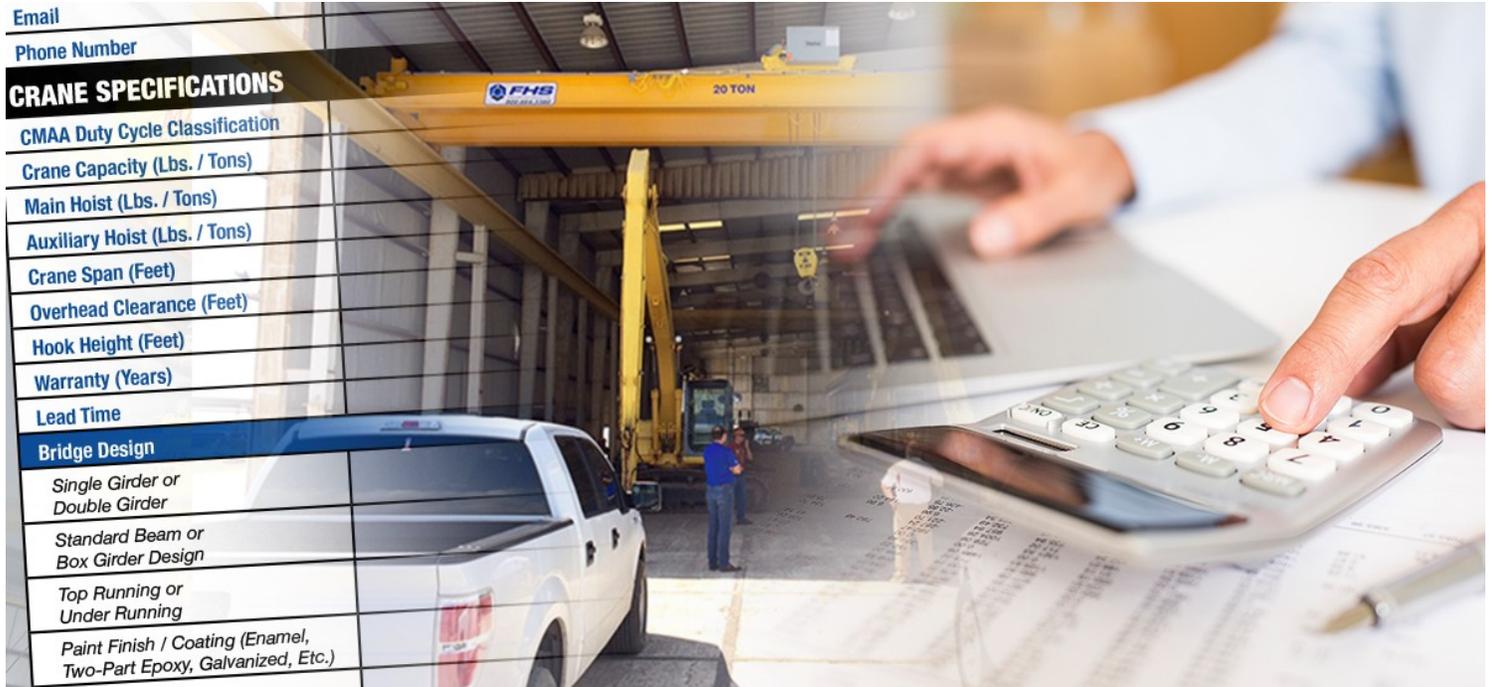
Runway Location

Is there an existing runway in place? Is it sufficient to support the new crane structure? If a new runway system needs to be built, it will need to be determined if it will be mounted to new support columns, or if it can be tied back to the building. Is the building capable of supporting the new crane system? Is the flooring able to support the loads of the crane?

Consider any overhead or wall obstructions that may require additional design and engineering considerations. OSHA requires 3" clearance above the crane and 2" of clearance on the sides of the crane. Support columns cannot be put over drains, or on cracked or broken concrete.

How to Compare Overhead Crane Quotes

Once you've gone through the consultation process, a crane manufacturer will re-group with their team of estimators, engineers, and draftsmen and begin putting together a comprehensive proposal.



This process can take anywhere from 3-30 business days depending on the number of cranes being quoted, the complexity of the project, and the sourcing of crane components. Once they've completed this process, they'll get back in touch with you to submit their official bid for the project.

Keep in mind that price should never be the only factor when selecting an overhead crane company to partner with. An overhead crane system is a complex and critical piece of equipment used to improve your business' efficiency and production flows, and you should only partner with a company that you truly feel comfortable with.

We suggest evaluating the following things when comparing overhead crane quotes so that you have a comprehensive idea of what you'll be spending on an overhead crane installation:

Project Specifications

For a project of this scale, it's so important that each company bases their quotes off of the same information and specifications so that you can make a true side-by-side comparison of each company's capabilities and pricing.

If you get one bid that seems extraordinarily high or low, review their quote carefully and make sure that the specifications look right. You can also black out any pricing information from quotes you received from other bidders, and ask the outlying company to review the other quotes that you received—this ensures that what they're quoting is a true apples-to-apples comparison and may allow them to adjust their quote, if necessary.

Warranty

Make sure you have a clear understanding of the manufacturer's warranty policies on workmanship, components, and materials.

Incidentals

Any additional charges that may not appear in the quote. These can include:

- Price increases or surcharges tied into materials—like steel, for example
- Taxes, or freight charges, that may not have been included in the estimate
- Any additional fees related to obtaining permits, special equipment, or obstructed access for installation that may increase the cost of the project

Follow-Up

Did a representative from the company contact you to explain their quote and make sure that you understand and are comfortable with the breakdown of costs?

Project Timeline

Have they committed to meeting your project's specific time frame and window for installation?

References

Have they provided, or can they provide, references for you to reach out to? Ask other companies that they've done business with if they were satisfied with the following:

- Overall relationship with the crane builder
- Overall quality of work
- Builder's commitment to keeping project on track and within budget
- Delivery of crane to agreed-upon specifications