



Lifting Machine Inspectors (LMIs) open for all?

In South Africa, the role of the Lifting Machinery Inspector (LMI) is legally mandated and specified in various regulations. From a qualification perspective and since inception of the role, it is required that only individuals registered with a SAQA-recognized professional body may legally perform the duties of an LMI.

Now, almost 20 years after the qualification was first established, there is a standardized national qualification framework in place, but the academic pathway for becoming an LMI is still not clear and therefore not attracting a lot of prospective candidates. Aspirant inspectors are left to navigate an uncertain route and relevant requirements to eventual appointment, being heavily reliant on prior experience, mentorship, and professional evaluation.

While the legislative intent to ensure that lifting machinery

is only inspected and tested by qualified, competent and registered professionals is clear, the absence of a simple and easy-to-follow accredited training pipeline and “roadmap” has made it difficult to replenish and essentially grow the pool of LMI’s.

Furthermore, this highlights a common policymaking challenge:

When legislation is tabled without adequately bolstering supporting systems and infrastructure, the results do not perfectly align with the intention. Execution and practical application is where the challenge become clear.

A shortage of qualified LMI’s in the industry has far-reaching consequences such as:

- Operational delays due to inspection bottlenecks
- Increased safety risks on sites using uninspected (or inadequately inspected equipment

- Risk of untrained personnel with counterfeit qualifications conducting inspections or load tests
 - Industry frustration due to unclear legal expectations, while inspections by LMIs remain a requirement
 - Loss of institutional depth as older inspectors retire without sufficient knowledge being transferred to future LMI’s (I.e. inadequate guidance and mentorship)
- There is therefore an opportunity for a consultative and multi-stakeholder initiative to provide accessible and well-structured LMI training and appointment pathways. Industry stakeholders, along with South Africa’s legislators, can avoid a potential shortage of LMI’s and a possible lifting machinery safety crisis.

By investing in more accessible formal qualifications and practical training avenues, we can ensure that the industry remains relevant, compliant and safe—not just on paper, but in practice.

In the words of Cyril Ramaphosa made on the 10th of June 2025:

“Yet we face persistent challenges. Poverty, unemployment and inequality are deep wounds that prevent us from reaching our full potential as a nation and as a country.”

“Millions of people are under-employed and unemployed. Many of those who work earn wages that cannot sustain them or their families. That is why we have agreed to convene an inclusive National Dialogue.”

This forms part of that dialogue, taking action now lies with us...

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 **SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY**

QUALIFICATION:
National Certificate: **Lifting Machine Inspection**

SAQA QUAL ID	QUALIFICATION TITLE
58496	National Certificate: Lifting Machine Inspection
SGS	PROVIDER
SGS Engineering	
ETQA	

QUALIFICATION TYPE	FIELD	SUBFIELD
National Certificate	6 - Manufacturing Engineering and Technology	Engineering and Related Design

ABET BAND	MINIMUM CREDITS	NQF LEVEL	QUAL CLASS
Undefined	120	Level 5	Regular-ELOAC

PURPOSE AND RATIONALE OF THE QUALIFICATION
Purpose:

This qualification is aimed at people who work or intend to work within the lifting machinery industry, and who seek recognition for essential skills in lifting machine inspection.

Recipients of this qualification know about and are able to conduct lifting machine inspections to ensure safe conditions of these machines.

The qualification is designed to be flexible and accessible so that people are able to demonstrate the competencies required to work safely in the lifting machinery industry.