

OSHA Standards Interpretation and Compliance Letters

08/07/1997 - OSHA's requirements for enclosed hardware used in 'third rail' ladder safety devices for towers.

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- **Record Type:** Interpretation
 - **Standard Number:** [1910.27](#); [1910.268](#); [1926.105](#); [1926.1053](#)
 - **Subject:** OSHA's requirements for enclosed hardware used in 'third rail' ladder safety devices for towers.
 - **Information Date:** 08/07/1997
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August 7, 1997

Mr. Lynn A. Warren
Safety Supervisor
Custodis-Ecodyne, Inc.
Route 1, Box 1256
Barnsdall, OK 74002

Dear Mr. Warren:

This is in response to your letter of November 26, 1996, to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in which you requested an opinion on OSHA's requirements for enclosed hardware used in 'third rail' ladder safety devices for towers. I apologize for the delay in this response.

OSHA has no standard that specifically requires fixed ladders to be installed on communication towers and, hence, no standard that requires ladder safety devices to be provided on communication towers without

fixed ladders.

OSHA's safety and health standards for construction (29 CFR Part 1926) require fall protection for employees on communications towers (1926.105) where the fall distance exceeds 25 feet. Under the fixed ladder provisions [1926.1053(a)(18)], OSHA requires that fixed ladders be equipped with cages, wells, ladder safety devices or self-retracting lifelines. Please note that these requirements apply only for construction activities.

The safety and health standards for general industry (29 CFR Part 1910) contain fall protection requirements for non-construction work activities such as maintenance on communication towers. For example, workers must be protected from falling from communication towers under 1910.268. Section 1910.27 contains requirements for fixed ladders, such as ladder safety devices or cages.

You may be interested to know that OSHA has been in communication with the National Association of Tower Erectors (NATE) regarding hazards associated with both the construction and the maintenance phase of communications towers. NATE has provided information to OSHA regarding the industry's view on appropriate fall protection measures. That information will be discussed in an upcoming rulemaking action to be conducted by the Agency to revise the construction fall protection requirements (Subpart M). It is expected that Subpart M will be officially opened for comment in the Federal Register last in 1997.

I have enclosed a copy of the Federal Register of April 10, 1990, which proposes a revision to the general industry standard for ladders. As you can see, it discusses the use of ladder safety devices and other measures of protecting workers from falling from towers during maintenance activities. For additional information on this proposed general industry rule, please contact Mr. Chap Pierce of the Directorate of Safety Standards Programs at (202) 219-7216 or by writing to him at U.S. Department of Labor (OSHA), Directorate of Safety Standards Programs, Room N3621, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

Sincerely,

Russell B. Swanson, Director
Directorate of Construction

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