

Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution: Major Changes to the Rule

This fact sheet highlights some of the major changes in OSHA's General Industry (29 CFR 1910.269) and Construction (29 CFR 1926, Subpart V) standards, covering work involving electric power generation, transmission and distribution lines and equipment. The revisions better protect workers, while also making the two standards more consistent. Several important revisions to the standards include:

Information Transfer, §1910.269(a)(3) and §1926.950(c)

Who is a host employer? A host employer is an employer who operates, or controls the operating procedures for, an electric power generation, transmission, or distribution installation on which a contract employer is performing work covered by the revised standard(s). In many cases, the host employer is the electric utility company.

Who is a contract employer? A contract employer is an employer under contract, other than a host employer, who performs work covered by the revised standards.

- Before work begins host employers *must inform* contract employers of safety-related information including:
 - Nominal voltages of lines and equipment
 - Maximum switching transient voltages
 - Presence of hazardous induced voltages
 - Presence of protective grounds and equipment grounding conductors
 - Locations of circuits and equipment, including electric supply lines, communications lines, and fire-protective signaling circuits

And if known

- Condition of any protective grounds and equipment grounding conductors
 - Condition of poles
 - Environmental conditions relating to safety
- Subcontractors must also receive this information. For example, a host employer may

arrange for the information exchange through a contract requirement for the contractor to share the information with any subcontractors.

- Contract employers must ensure that their workers are informed of the hazards they find out about during the information transfer, and let the host employer know of any hazardous conditions they find during their work.
- Host and contract employers must coordinate their work rules and procedures so that all workers are protected.

Minimum Approach Distances (MADs), §1910.269(l)(3) and §1926.960(c)(1)

- The employer must establish MADs *of at least* the distances computed using the tables in the standards.
- The employer must ensure that no worker crosses the MAD, unless they are appropriately insulated from electrical hazards.
- Work on systems operating at over 72.5 kV requires the employer to determine the maximum anticipated per-unit transient overvoltage, phase-to-ground (T).

Fall Protection, §1910.269(g)(2) and §1926.954(b)

- Employers generally must ensure that all workers (both qualified and unqualified) use appropriate fall protection when they are climbing or changing location on poles, towers, or similar structures.
- Each worker working from an aerial lift *must use either* a fall restraint system, or a personal fall arrest system. Workers working from an aerial lift must not use work-positioning equipment.

Protecting Workers from electric arcs and flames, §1910.269(I)(8) and §1926.960(g)

- Employers must assess the workplace to identify workers exposed to hazards from flames or electric arcs.
- Employers must make a reasonable estimate of the incident heat energy for every worker exposed to hazards from electric arcs.
- Employers must ensure that each worker exposed to hazards from flames or electric arcs does not wear clothing that could melt or ignite, and that each worker's outer layer is flame-resistant, as specified in the standards.
- Employers must ensure that when the estimated incident heat energy exceeds 2.0 cal/cm² workers wear protective clothing, as specified in the standards.

For additional information, see www.osha.gov/dsg/power_generation.

Workers' Rights

Workers have the right to:

- Working conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.
- Receive information and training (in a language and vocabulary the worker

understands) about workplace hazards, methods to prevent them, and the OSHA standards that apply to their workplace.

- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- File a complaint asking OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA's rules. OSHA will keep all identities confidential.
- Exercise their rights under the law without retaliation, including reporting an injury or raising health and safety concerns with their employer or OSHA. If a worker has been retaliated against for using their rights, they must file a complaint with OSHA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days.

For more information, see [OSHA's Workers page](#).

How to Contact OSHA

For questions or to get information or advice, to report an emergency, fatality, inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye, or to file a confidential complaint, contact your nearest OSHA office, visit www.osha.gov or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

For assistance, contact us. We can help. It's confidential.



www.osha.gov (800) 321-OSHA (6742)



U.S. Department of Labor