

Safety Scene

Avoiding Common OSHA Violations by Molly E. Butz

At our readers' request, SBC's regular safety column is back— this time with some tips on how to avoid common OSHA violations.

You think OSHA is a four-letter word. Just the thought of an inspection makes you wake up in a cold sweat. Basically, you'd rather take your chances as a contestant on Fear Factor than come face to face with a compliance officer. Relax, you don't need to feel that way. In a past column, we explored how to ["Be Prepared for a Visit from OSHA"](#) (December 2003). This column will delve into the land of common OSHA violations in the component manufacturing industry. Keeping an eye on these five concerns in your plant will mean a safer workplace for everyone.

Every business establishment is assigned a Standard Industrial Classification or SIC code.* The following are the five most prevalent safety citations** for SIC code 2439, defined as "establishments primarily engaged in producing laminated or fabricated trusses, arches, and other structural members of lumber."

5. Standard 1910.212, Machines, General Requirements, covers all general machinery and the associated guarding precautions. The following are some of the component manufacturing machines that OSHA lists in the standard: power presses, power saws and portable power tools. These machines **MUST** have the proper point of operation guarding in place.

4. Occupational Noise Exposure is an increasingly widespread concern in many manufacturing facilities. OSHA states that "protection against the effects of noise shall be provided when the sounds levels exceed those shown in the table below when measured on the 'A scale' of a standard sound level meter at slow response."

PERMISSIBLE NOISE EXPOSURES	
Duration per day, hours	Sound level dBA (decibel) slow response
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1.5	102
1	105
0.5	110
0.25	115

Having the noise levels tested in your facility is a good idea if there's even the slightest chance that this might be a problem. Moreover, earplugs are a very inexpensive way to protect your employees and your company.

3. The Mechanical Power-Transmission Apparatus Standard, 1910.219, covers all types and

shapes of power-transmission belts and includes safety issues such as proper guarding, installation, inspection and lubrication.

2. Lack of safety control while servicing or performing machinery maintenance is an easy way to get a fine, or worse, deal with an injury or death in your facility. **The Control of Hazardous Energy, Lockout/Tagout standard, 1910.147**, tackles the issues surrounding an unexpected energization or start up of machines or equipment, or release of stored energy. ANY time an employee is required to remove or bypass a guard or other safety device, or required to place any part of his or her body into an area on a machine or piece of equipment associated with a danger zone, lockout/tagout procedures should be followed. (Note: Minor tool changes and adjustments including minor servicing activities are an exception.)

DRUM ROLL PLEASE...

The number one most frequently cited OSHA Standard Violation: (Are we seeing a trend here?) **Woodworking Machinery Requirements, Standard 1910.213**, encompasses machinery and machine guarding related to woodworking processes. The items in your facility that are affected include circular saws, table saws, cutoff saws, rips saws and more.

Yes, it's definitely a trend. Three of the top five OSHA violations involve machine guarding. And really, the small amount of time and energy you think you're saving by removing or bypassing machinery guarding can mean a lot of pain, heartache or worse down the road. Moreover, machine guarding is your responsibility. Your operations are individualized to your production areas and machinery, which means that you cannot rely solely on your suppliers to know exactly what your specific guarding needs will be. It's quite possible that you will need to order or design custom guards to ensure that your manufacturing processes run quickly, efficiently, and most importantly, safely.

Let's hope you never face that dreaded inspection, and chances are you won't. But by keeping these common safety concerns under control, you can go home every night and rest assured that if you do find yourself standing eye-to-eye with a compliance officer in the morning, you're five steps ahead of the game.

*SIC codes are four digit numerical codes assigned by the U.S. government to identify the primary business of the establishment to facilitate the collection, presentation and analysis of data.

**Denotes the standards which were cited by Federal OSHA for the specified SIC during the period of October 2002 through September 2003.

To pose a question for this column or to learn more about WTCA's Operation Safety Program, contact WTCA Staff at 608/274-4849, email wtca@woodtruss.com,

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