



**VOSH PROGRAM DIRECTIVE: 06-222**

**Issued: June 15, 1987**  
**Renumbered: August 15, 2005**

**SUBJECT: Interpretations of Electrical Standard for Construction Industry  
(§§1926.432(a) and 1926.417(b))**

**A. Purpose.**

This revised directive updates old references and renumbers this interpretations of standards to conform to the VOSH program directives' new classification and numbering system (See VOSH Program Directive 01-001A).

This directive transmits to field personnel federal OSHA interpretations of §§1926.432(a) and 1926.417(b) of the Electrical Standard for the Construction Industry.

*This Program Directive is an internal guideline, not a statutory or regulatory rule, and is intended to provide instructions to VOSH personnel regarding internal operation of the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Program and is solely for the benefit of the program. This document is not subject to the Virginia Register Act or the Administrative Process Act; it does not have general application and is not being enforced as having the force of law.*

**B. Scope.**

This directive applies VOSH-wide and specifically to Occupational Safety Compliance and Cooperative Programs personnel.

**C. Action.**

Directors and Managers shall ensure that field personnel understand and enforce the interpretive guidance for §§1926.432(a) and 1926.417(b) of the electrical standard for the construction industry.

**D. Cancellation.**

VOSH Program Directive 12-222 (June 15, 1987).

**E. Background.**

The attached interpretations address questions which have arisen at both the federal and state level. Federal OSHA issued the interpretations in response to those questions on February 27, 1987.

*C. Ray Davenport*  
Commissioner

ATTACHMENT: Electrical Standards for Construction, Revised Subpart K (2/20/87).

DISTRIBUTION: Commissioner of Labor and Industry  
Assistant Commissioner – Programs  
Directors and Managers  
VOSH Compliance Staff  
Legal Support Staff  
OSHA Regional Administrator, Region III  
OSHA Area Office, Norfolk

**U.S. Department of Labor**

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration**  
Washington, DC 20210

**FEB 27 1987**

Reply to the Attention of

MEMORANDUM FOR:

STATE DESIGNEES  
7(c)(1) Consultation Managers

FROM:

BRUCE HILLENBRAND, Director  
Federal-State Operations

SUBJECT:

Electrical Standards for Construction,  
Revised Subpart K

The attached memorandum addresses a number of questions that have arisen recently with regard to the application of the newly revised Subpart K, the electrical standard for construction, to the electrical utility industry. We understand similar questions have arisen in the States in applying their standard. We hope this will be of assistance to you in addressing them. There is also a pending court challenge to the standard, brought by the Edison Electric Institute, which addresses these and other issues. If you have further questions, please contact your respective Regional Administrator.

Attachment

cc: Attachment previously provided Ras through OFC

**U.S. Department of Labor**

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration**  
Washington, DC 20210

**FEB 20 1987**

Reply to the Attention of

MEMORANDUM TO: REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
STATE DESIGNEES  
7(c)(1) CONSULTATION MANAGERS

FROM: BRUCE HILLENBRAND, Director  
Federal-State Operations

SUBJECT: ELECTRICAL STANDARDS FOR CONSTRUCTION,  
REVISED SUBPART K

In revising its electrical standards for construction, OSHA devised a new format, which divides 29 C.F.R. 1926, Subpart K into four categories. As stated in the preamble to the final rule (51 Fed. Reg. 25297), OSHA believes that the use of this format can provide for the continued effective coverage of hazards and equipment formerly addressed, with enough flexibility to accommodate other equipment and protective methods in the future. Electrical safety-related work practices, Part II of this new format, carried over work-practice requirements from the former Subpart K. For example, the former §1926.400(g) was moved, without substantive change, and placed in new §1926.417, under Part II of Subpart K.

Questions have arisen regarding the application of newly-revised 29 C.F.R. 1926 Subpart K to the electric utility industry. OSHA has therefore determined to clarify the Subpart with respect to two provisions, 29 C.F.R. 1926.432(a) and 29 C.F.R. 1926.417(b).

1. 29 C.F.R. 1926.432(a). Section 1926.432(a), requiring that equipment used in certain areas be "identified for use" in those areas by testing laboratories, is not applicable to power generation installations. Section 1926.432 was taken directly from Sections 110-11 and 300-6 of the 1981 National Electrical Code. Because installations for the generation, transmission, or distribution of electric energy are excluded from the scope of the NEC, it was not OSHA's intent that new §1926.432 be applied to such installations.

2. 29 C.F.R. 1926.417(b). A second concern regarding Subpart K relates to application of 29 C.F.R. 1926.417(b) to electric utilities. That provision, titled "Lockout and tagging of circuits," requires that "equipment or circuits that are deenergized shall be rendered inoperative..." This provision was taken without change from existing Subpart K and no change in required practices is intended. OSHA does not construe this provision to require that all disconnects used for deenergization of equipment or circuits be locked in all instances in the electric utility industry. See 51 Fed. Reg. 25315. Specifically, where there are unique elements of power generating installations that would make application of locks or other means of rendering equipment inoperable infeasible, the standard should not be read to require locks provided that an equivalent

level of employee safety is achieved by tagging.

Guidance for implementing this determination may be drawn from pertinent provisions of Subpart V of the Construction Standards, governing construction work performed on power transmission or distribution lines or equipment, including construction in energized substations. Where lines or equipment must be deenergized during construction, 29 C.F.R. 1926.957(b) and 1926.950(d) apply to require appropriate tagging procedures. Thus, to promote uniformity of procedures for deenergizing and tagging of generating installations during all types of work and to maximize the safety of affected employees, OSHA does not apply §1926.417 to require lockout of installations of electric equipment where lockout is infeasible, as long as the employer is following the procedures for tagging prescribed in §1926.950(d) as specified in 1926.957(b), and is adequately training employees in the use of these procedures.