OR-OSHA
Construction Depot
QUARTERLY

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The Construction Advisory Committee: working for you

OR-OSHA Administrator Pete DeLuca formed the Construction Advisory Committee in the summer of 2001 to strengthen the partnership of OR-OSHA with the private sector. The group's mission is to address safety issues affecting the construction industry. Members of the group include representatives of labor, employers, trade organizations, and government agencies. The committee meets monthly.

The committee quickly developed a goal and vision for future work: "To create a partnership between OR-OSHA and construction employers, organizations, and employee groups to identify and implement improvements necessary to prevent injury or illness."

The committee works with other organizations involved in the industry's safety efforts, keeping them informed so that all can work toward the common goal of preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. The committee also identifies new safety and health concerns, drawing on the resources of the representatives and their organizations to resolve them.

The group regularly discusses what OR-OSHA calls uniformity issues. These discussions are meant to ensure that workplace safety and health rules are interpreted and enforced uniformly throughout Oregon.

The Construction Advisory Committee also wants to serve you: If you have workplace safety or health concerns you want the committee to address, please contact one of the following representatives:

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Using a work platform on a rough-terrain lift truck?

If so, make sure that it's not too wide. (A rough-terrain forklift is a wheeled truck designed to be used on natural terrain as well as the disturbed terrain of construction sites.) The ASME/ANSI standard for rough terrain forklift trucks, B56.6-2002 [8.24.1(b)], says the platform floor can't exceed the overall width of a lift truck measured across the load-bearing tires *plus 10 inches on either side*. For example, if your rough-terrain lift truck measures 96 inches across its load bearing tires, the platform can't exceed 116 inches. The platform in the photo clearly exceeds the truck's maximum width. It makes a hazardous work surface; materials or workers on either end of the platform could make it unstable.

OR-OSHA has no requirements for the floor dimensions of work platforms used on rough-terrain forklift trucks; however, compliance officers may cite the General Duty Clause when they see platforms that exceed the limits set in the ASME/ANSI standard. (The General Duty Clause requires employers to provide a safe, healthful working environment for all workers.)

AMSE/ANSI Standard B56.6-2002 [8.24.1(b)] says a work platform floor can't exceed the overall width of a rough-terrain lift truck measured across the load-bearing tires plus 10 inches on either side. The platform on this truck exceeds the overall width of the truck by a substantial margin.

GFCIs: Effective if they're *not* defective

Ground fault circuit interrupters are credited for reducing residential electrocutions by 50 percent since they were introduced in the late 1960s. Today, more than 400 million GFCIs are installed throughout the United States. However, 10 percent of these devices may be defective because they are improperly installed or because harsh environments or power surges have damaged their internal parts.

Defective GFCIs are hazardous. They may continue to work as 120-volt, single phase 15-, 20-, or 30-ampere outlets, but they no longer prevent ground-fault electrical shocks — the most common electrical injury in homes and construction workplaces. Pushing the "test" or "reset" button just turns a damaged GFCI off and on; it doesn't fix the device.

The best way to determine if a GFCI is damaged is to test it with a polarity checking tool that has a built-in milliamp indicator. If the GFCI trips out at 4 to 6 milliamps, it's working; if it trips out below 4 milliamps, it's defective and must be replaced.

Did you know that Underwriters Laboratories recently revised its safety requirements for ground fault circuit interrupters? GFCIs that meet the new requirements – which became effective January 2003 – are safer, but more expensive, than the older ones. Among the improvements in the new device:

- Trips if improperly wired
- Handles higher surge current
- Has more resistance to moist conditions
- Has more resistance to false tripping caused by electrical noise

All newly manufactured GFCIs must meet the UL 2003 safety requirements, though manufacturers will be allowed to sell stocks of older devices. Make sure the next GFCI you purchase meets the UL 2003 requirements.