

March 25, 2003

Jeremy L. Lawson, Safety Manager  
Slayden Construction, Inc.  
P.O. Box 625  
Stayton, Oregon 97383

Dear Mr. Lawson:

In answer to the first question in your March 12th letter, the practice of dragging a trench shield along the bottom of a trench with an employee(s) inside is acceptable. The front of the shield may be lifted slightly, with the majority of the shield remaining in contact with the bottom of the trench. The sides of the shield must be kept close to the sides of the trench to prevent any chance of tipping or lateral displacement. The employee(s) must move with the shield and always stay within it. A ladder or other safe means of exit also must move with the shield and be available for immediate use.

In answer to your second question, ground-fault interrupter protection must be provided for all employees engaged in construction activities and using 125-volt, single-phase, 15-, 20-, and 30- amp receptacles. The standard is performance-based, which allows the actual GFCI to be located anywhere in the circuit (at the beginning of the circuit, mid-circuit, or between the cord and the tool) as long as GFI protection is provided to all employees working off from that circuit, or handling the energized cord.

For further information, please contact Mike Mitchell at (503) 947-7450. You are also invited to see the OR-OSHA pages on the Internet at the above address.

Sincerely,

Mike L. Mitchell for  
Marilyn K. Schuster, Manager  
Standards & Technical Resources  
Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division