



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Department of Consumer and Business Services

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L. Kenneth Austin
Electrical Construction Co
PO Box 10286
Portland OR 97210-0286

Dear Mr. Austin:

This is in response to your letter of March 31, 1993, in which you asked for clarification on Subdivision X of the Construction Code relating to ladders and stairways and where they must be provided.

For a complete understanding of the scope and application of Subpart X, there must be an understanding of the context in which Subpart X was proposed by Federal OSHA in 1986. At that time, Subpart X was only one part of an integrated trilogy of Subparts intended to address a variety of different situations that had common concerns.

Subpart L - Scaffolds, contained separate provisions that addressed access and egress requirements specific to scaffolds. For a variety of reasons related to the rulemaking process, these were not adopted. You should look to Subpart X to apply to all parts of 1926, the Construction Code, except when specifically excluded such as for scaffolding. Subdivision X requirements do not apply to ladders which are specifically manufactured for scaffold access and egress such as those incorporated into most welded frames. However, Subpart X does apply to job-made and manufactured portable ladders which are intended for general purpose use and which are then used for scaffold access and egress.

Although the definitions and provisions of Subpart X require all points of access to be provided with a ladder or stairway, the standard is not intended to require such facilities at every location where employees change elevations. The standard is intended to require a ladder or stairway between levels in at least one location between levels so that employees can change levels in an easy, safe, and convenient manner. The obvious reason is to allow access to different elevations in a way that minimizes the potential for fall injuries that can result when employees are otherwise required to climb on items (i.e. columns, cross-bracing on scaffolds) not properly designed for climbing. In

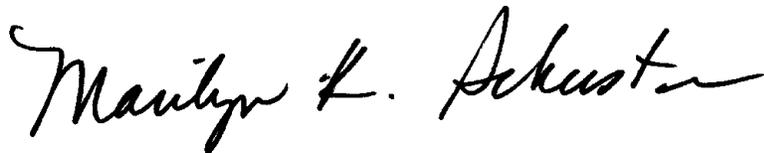
situations where non-routine access is required, such as climbing vertical steel to make initial connections, and where fall protection systems are used, then the concern of fall injury is addressed and ladders and stairways are not required. However, frequent access to the same location or by more than one employee will negate the finding that the access requirements are non-routine and a ladder or stairway may be required.

To be more specific, access to a pickup truck or other vehicle would not be covered by Subpart X. Occasional access to the bed of a trailer again is not covered by Subpart X. As an illustration, 437-002-2225(2)(b) and 437-003-2225(2)(b) would require safe access to cabs but not specific special access ladders to truck beds.

Where there are general requirements and specific requirements, the specific requirements will apply. In the case of trenches, the specific requirements of access ladders, stairways or ramps, when the trench is 4 foot or more in depth, would apply and not the 19 inch criteria in Subpart X. Thus, a ladder would not be required in a 2-foot deep trench.

I hope this has addressed your concerns. If you have additional questions, please call OR-OSHA's Technical section at 378-3272.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marilyn K. Schuster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marilyn K. Schuster, Manager
Standards and Technical Resources Section
Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division