

**OREGON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

PROGRAM DIRECTIVE

Program Directive A-173
Issued November 1, 1981
Revised March 16, 2018

SUBJECT: Guardrail Height in General Industry

AFFECTED STANDARDS/

DIRECTIVES: 1910.29(b)

PURPOSE: This instruction provides guidance for the equitable enforcement of 1910.29(b) as it pertains to the acceptable height of guardrails.

BACKGROUND: A Field Information Memorandum #74-87 (FIM) was previously issued regarding the height of guardrails. FIM's were reissued and converted to OSHA #100 Series Program Directives. The Walking-Working Surfaces Division 2/D rule is effective in Oregon as of Nov. 1, 2017.

- A. The stipulations set forth herein provide for compatible specifications between ANSI, the NFPA, and OSHA, regarding the acceptable height of guardrails in workplaces.
- B. The consideration of the findings by the National Bureau of Standards research study, Report Number NBSIR 76-1139 Investigation of Guardrails for the Protection of Employees from Occupational Hazards, dated July 1976.

ACTION: Compliance officers must classify technical violations of 1910.29(b) in accordance with Oregon OSHA probability and severity guidelines.

- A. Existing guardrails must consist of a top rail, intermediate rail, and posts, or equivalent, and must have a minimum vertical height of 39 inches to 45 inches (42 inches nominal) from the upper surface of the top rail to the walking-working surface.
- B. Guardrails with heights greater than 45 inches are permissible provided the extra height does not create a dangerous situation for employees. Openings beneath the top rail that would permit the passage of a 19 inch or larger spherical object would create an unsafe condition; therefore, additional mid-rails may be necessary.

EFFECTIVE

DATE: This directive is effective immediately and will remain in effect until canceled or superseded.

History: Issued 11-1-1981 Revised 1-1-1982, 1-1-1985, 11/9/1992, 7/13/1993, 10/21/1993, 6/4/2001, 6/4/2001, 3/8/2013, and 3/16/2018