

OSHA COMPLIANCE FOR Warehousing

Back safety

HazCom

*Slips, trips,
& falls*

PPE

Electrical safety

Exit Routes

Forklifts

Fire protection



J. J. Keller
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Since 1953



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OSHA Compliance for Warehousing

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OSHA Compliance for Warehousing

Introduction

About 1,000,000 people work in over 17,000 public and private warehouses and storage facilities in the U.S., according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Establishments in the warehousing and storage industry are primarily engaged in operating warehousing and storage facilities for general merchandise, refrigerated goods, and other warehouse products. These establishments provide facilities to store and secure goods. They may also provide a range of services, often referred to as logistics services, related to the distribution of goods.

Warehouse and storage operations can present a wide variety of potential hazards for the worker that can lead to injury, illness, and fatality. In fact, the BLS also reports that about 15 employees die each year on the job in the warehousing and storage industry. This makes the fatality rate for the industry higher than the national average rate for all industries. The non-fatal injury and illness rate too is higher. Some potential hazards for workers in warehousing and storage include: unsafe use of forklifts, improper stacking of products, failure to use personal protective equipment, failure to follow proper lockout/tagout procedures, inadequate fire safety provisions, or back injuries.

While OSHA covers a wide variety of industries, the warehousing and storage industry is also subject to OSHA regulations. The most frequently cited standards for the industry include 29 CFR 1910.178, Powered Industrial Trucks; 1910.37, Exit Routes; 1910.1200, Hazard Communication; 1910.303 and .305, Electrical; 1910.147, Lockout/Tagout; 1910.134, Respiratory Protection; 1910.176, Handling Materials; 1910.119, Process Safety Management; and several dozen others.

OSHA COMPLIANCE FOR WAREHOUSING is designed specifically for this industry. This product provides compliance information specific to the hazards and top OSHA regulations of the warehousing and storage industry. It also helps answer frequent compliance questions posed by those in the industry, offers written plans, and lists required inspections and training provisions.

Getting started with OSHA compliance for warehousing

- ❑ **Determine which specific OSHA regulations you must comply with.** Even if you know you are covered by OSHA's "General Industry" regulations, you still have to narrow down the focus to those that are specifically applicable to your operations. Some will apply, some will not. **Note:** This publication is focused on federal OSHA requirements; some states, such as California, Oregon, Washington, Michigan, and Minnesota, have their own approved state OSHA requirements that take precedence over federal OSHA. See the **OSHA** section of this publication for information on state versus federal jurisdiction.
 - OSHA's list of most frequently cited standards by industry can help you narrow down the scope. Type in your NAICS code at the following website: <https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/citedstandard.html>. However, many purchasers of this manual will have NAICS codes that fall under one or more of the following codes:
 - NAICS 493 — Warehousing and Storage
 - NAICS 4931 — Warehousing and Storage
 - NAICS 49311 — General Warehousing and Storage
 - NAICS 49312 — Refrigerated Warehousing and Storage
 - NAICS 49313 — Farm Product Warehousing and Storage

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○ NAICS 49319 — Other Warehousing and Storage

- You can also use prior inspection history, as well as injury and illness data to determine areas on which to focus.

- ❑ **Determine which written plans** you must have. Written plans outline how the company will carry out various functions of a program. For example, most employers are required to have a Hazard Communication program; the written plan would include a list of hazardous chemicals used, who is responsible for obtaining missing safety data sheets, which workers are exposed to hazardous chemicals, the type of training used, the type of labeling system used, where safety data sheets are kept, and so on. See the ***list of required plans*** in the Recordkeeping section of this publication. Also, see ***sample written plan templates***, which appear at the end of most sections in the publication.
- ❑ **Determine training requirements.** OSHA requirements vary in their specificity with regard to training. Some require refresher training, some do not. Some require documentation, some do not. Each employer should review the individual training requirements to determine those that apply. See the ***Training Requirements At-a-Glance*** section in this publication for a guide to the “what,” “when,” and “what documentation” for training.
- ❑ **Determine inspection requirements.** Regular inspection of machinery and equipment is critical, though the degree to which OSHA addresses inspections in the regulations vary. In some cases, a visual inspection pre-use is required, in others a more thorough inspection may be required. See the ***Inspection Requirements At-a-Glance*** section in this publication for a guide to the “what,” “when,” and “what documentation” of inspections.
- ❑ **Survey workers** on safety and compliance needs. Workers can provide valuable input on hazardous conditions and potential controls.
- ❑ **Set up an incident investigation protocol** with a focus on root-cause analysis.
- ❑ **Implement a safety committee** with representation from all areas of the operations. (Some states require safety committees; federal OSHA does not, though they encourage their use.)
- ❑ **Document injuries and illnesses** (unless you are exempt) on OSHA recordkeeping forms. (See the Recordkeeping section of this publication).

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Ergonomics — Back Safety

- **Thoroughly evaluate and, as necessary, promptly take action to correct any deficiencies in your back safety program.**
- **Record any back disorders if they are recordable injuries or illnesses**, in accordance with 29 CFR 1904.
- **Maintain any employee exposure and medical records related to your safe lifting program** in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.1020.

In Depth

Back disorders are a common source of pain and disability among warehouse and storage industry employees. These disorders can include:

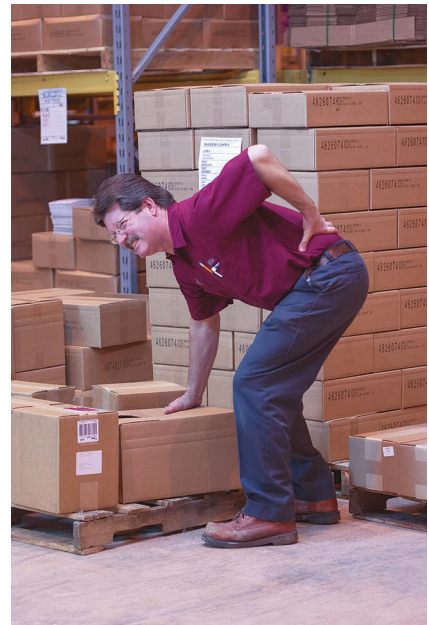
- Strains and sprains,
- Torn ligaments,
- Muscle spasms, and
- Herniated or ruptured (slipped) discs.

Chronic back disorders can develop gradually as a result of micro-trauma brought about by repetitive activity over time or can be the product of a single traumatic event. Because of the slow and progressive onset of this internal injury, the condition is often ignored until the symptoms become acute, often resulting in disabling injury.

Acute back disorders, on the other hand, can be the immediate result of improper lifting techniques and/or lifting loads that are too heavy for the back to support. While an acute disorder may seem to be caused by a single well-defined incident, the real cause is often a combined interaction of the observed stressor coupled with years of weakening of the musculoskeletal support mechanism by repetitive micro-trauma. These disorders can arise in muscle, ligaments, vertebrae, and discs, either singly or in combination.

Whether chronic or acute, back disorders have the following signs and symptoms:

- Pain when attempting to assume normal posture,
- Decreased mobility, and
- Pain when standing or rising from a seated position.



Did You Know

Of all the parts of the body affected by injuries and illnesses involving days away from work (DAFW), the back dominates the list, with almost 2,580 cases per year in the warehousing and storage industry. That's about 21 percent of all DAFW cases affecting the industry annually. In comparison, employees in the industry suffer about 1,290 shoulder-related cases and 960 hand-related cases each year. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Ergonomics — Back Safety

Risk Factors

The spinal cord consists of 24 vertebrae, each separated from the next by soft discs that act as shock absorbers when the vertebra move. Abdominal muscles, as well as other muscles and ligaments that run along the spinal column, support the spine. However, if an employee's spine is not properly supported by these muscles, a quick twist or off-balanced lift, for example, can easily result in a low-back injury. Because the lower back (the lumbar area) carries most of an employee's weight, it is usually the first damaged area of his or her back. However, back disorders can also occur in the upper (cervical) and middle (thoracic) part of the back.

Simply put, back disorders result from exceeding the capability of the muscles, tendons, discs, or the cumulative effect of several contributors, including, but not limited to:

- Heavy lifting;
- Repetitive lifting;
- Lifting awkward loads;
- Lifting with forceful movement;
- Twisting while lifting;
- Bending while lifting and lifting below the knees;
- Reaching while lifting and lifting above the shoulders;
- Lifting at arms' length instead of close to the body;
- Sudden movements;
- Pushing and/or pulling;
- Whole-body vibration;
- Staying in one position (including sitting or standing) or bending for too long;
- Poor footing, such as on slippery floors;
- Hot environments, which can lead to fatigue;
- Cold environments, which can decrease blood flow and muscle strength;
- Inadequate lighting or blocked views, which can lead to awkward postures;
- Poor physical condition, being overweight, stress, or aging;
- Poor body mechanics or poor posture (slouching);
- Poor job or work area design;
- Fast work pace and excessive workload demands;
- Long hours and infrequent breaks; and
- Fatigued muscles.

In broader terms, the major contributing factors associated with the development of back disorders include:

- Physical factors (e.g., physical demands of the job);
- Ergonomic risk factors:
 - Repetitive motion (e.g., frequent reaching, lifting, or carrying);
 - Awkward postures (e.g., bending, twisting, reaching, working overhead, or holding fixed positions);
 - Forceful exertion (e.g., carrying or lifting heavy loads or pushing a loaded pallet jack);
 - Static postures (e.g., maintaining fixed positions for a long time);
 - Vibration (e.g., whole-body vibration from sitting or standing on surfaces that vibrate such as vehicles, equipment, or platforms); and
 - Contact pressure (e.g., grasping or contact from loads or leaning against parts or surfaces that are hard or have sharp edges);
- Environmental factors (e.g., hot/cold temperatures and high/low lighting);
- Individual factors (e.g., age, stature, medical conditions, and recreational activities); and
- Work organization factors (e.g., fast work pace, low-staffing levels, shift work, or lack of rest breaks).

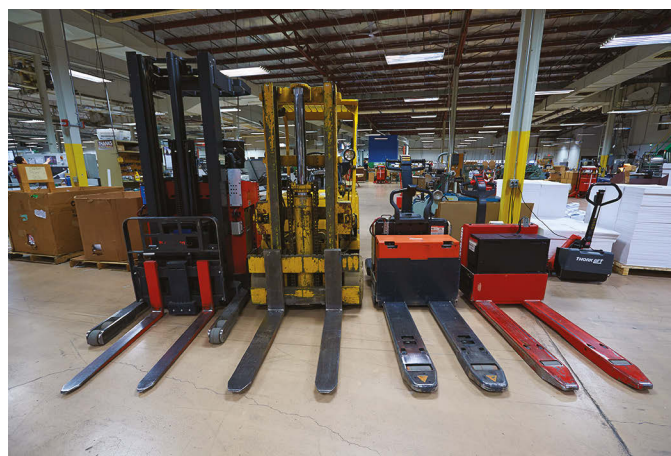
Powered Industrial Trucks



ez Explanations™

summaries from the J. J. Keller® subject-matter experts

Powered industrial trucks (PITs), commonly called forklifts or lift trucks, are used in many industries, primarily to move materials. They can also be used to raise, lower, or remove large objects or a number of smaller objects on pallets or in boxes, crates, or other containers. Powered industrial trucks can either be ridden by the operator or controlled by a walking operator. Each type presents different operating hazards. Workplace type and conditions are also factors in hazards commonly associated with powered industrial trucks. For example, OSHA says that retail establishments often face greater challenges than other worksites in maintaining pedestrian safety.



Did You Know

Of 88 fatalities in the warehousing and storage industry between 2011 and 2016, 22 were caused by a forklift, order picker, or powered platform truck. That's 25 percent!

Scope

OSHA's Powered Industrial Truck standard applies to most types of material handling equipment that is powered for horizontal movement. This includes forklifts, order pickers, powered pallet jacks, yard jockeys, stand-up and narrow aisle lift trucks, to name a few. The standard does not cover over-the-road haulage trucks and earth-moving equipment that has been modified to accept forks. In addition, the standard does not apply to scissor lifts or aerial lifts (some of those are covered by other OSHA standards, however).

Powered Industrial Trucks

Regulatory Citation

- 29 CFR 1910.178 — *Powered industrial trucks*



Enforcement Note

Violations of the Powered Industrial Trucks Standard, 29 CFR 1910.178, topped the list of frequently violated standards for the warehousing and storage industry in fiscal year 2017. For each inspection involving a violation of this standard, OSHA issued roughly 1.5 citations. That means many establishments received more than one citation.

Key Definitions

- **Center of gravity:** the point on an object at which all of the object's weight is concentrated. For symmetrical loads, the center of gravity is at the middle of the load.
- **Counterweight:** the weight that is built into the truck's basic structure and is used to offset the load's weight and to maximize the vehicle's resistance to tipping over.
- **Grade:** the slope of a surface, which is usually measured as the number of feet of rise or fall over a hundred foot horizontal distance (the slope is expressed as a percent).
- **Load center:** the horizontal distance from the load's edge (or the fork's or other attachment's vertical face) to the line of action through the load's center of gravity.
- **Powered Industrial Truck:** Fork trucks, tractors, platform lift trucks, motorized hand trucks, and other specialized industrial trucks powered by electric motors or internal combustion engines, excluding compressed air or nonflammable compressed gas-operated industrial trucks, farm vehicles, and to vehicles intended primarily for earth moving or over-the-road hauling.
- **Stability triangle:** the 3-point suspension system that runs along an imaginary line between a forklift's two front tires and the center of the rear axle. Even though the vehicle has four wheels, it is only supported at these three points.

Powered Industrial Trucks



Compliance Point

Whether or not skid steer equipment is covered under the 1910.178 powered industrial truck standard depends on whether the equipment was designed primarily as earthmoving equipment. If it is primarily earthmoving equipment, then 1910.178 does not apply. See the following two OSHA Letters of Interpretation for additional information:

- 10/21/1999 — Earthmoving equipment is not covered by 1910.178; skid-steer equipment may be covered
- 03/07/2000 — Applicability of 1910.178 to earth moving equipment and skid steer loaders

Summary of Requirements

OSHA requires employers to:

- **Evaluate the workplace for PITs.** OSHA's PIT standard covers most types of material handling equipment that is powered for horizontal movement. This includes sit-down rider forklifts, powered pallet jacks, order pickers, reach trucks, and narrow-aisle lift trucks to name a few.
- **Observe capacity ratings.** The PIT's nameplate contains important information on the PITs capacity. Capacity must never be exceeded.
- **Train all operators.** All PIT operators must undergo a rigorous training that includes a combination of **formal instruction** (e.g., lecture, discussion, interactive computer learning, video tape, written material), **practical training** (demonstrations performed by the trainer and practical exercises performed by the trainee), and **evaluation** of the operator's performance in the workplace. See 1910.178(l) for the full training requirements, which, among other things, include a specific list of topics, some of which may be truck- and workplace specific.
- **Re-evaluate operators** at least once every three years. Document this evaluation.
- **Provide refresher training** when operators are observed driving unsafely, involved in an incident or near miss, or are assigned a different type of equipment.
- **Allow only qualified persons to train operators.** Persons wishing to train forklift operators must have the "knowledge, training, and experience" to train operators and evaluate their competence. The OSHA standard does not further define this requirement or set any specific certifications.
- **Ensure equipment is inspected at least daily.** Where industrial trucks are used on a round-the-clock basis, they must be examined after each shift. OSHA does not require these inspections be documented; however, many companies keep a set number of inspections (e.g., "the most recent 2-month period") as a way to prove to OSHA the inspections are being conducted.
- **Remove unsafe equipment** from service immediately.
- **Only allow employees to operate correctly-classified equipment in hazardous atmospheres** — to prevent explosion hazards. See 29 CFR 1910.178 Table N-1.

Sanitation

Summary of Requirements

- **Provide body soap or other appropriate cleansing agents** convenient to the showers.
- **Prohibit food or beverages from being stored** or consumed in a toilet room or in any area exposed to a toxic material.
- **Ensure the number, size, and location of food waste receptacles** encourages their use and not result in overfilling.
- **Keep all places of employment clean** to the extent that the nature of the work allows.
- **Keep restrooms and washrooms** clean and sanitary.
- **Provide potable water** for drinking, washing and cooking. In addition, ensure that all outlets for water that are not suitable for drinking be clearly identified.

In Depth

The following is an overview of OSHA's requirements for sanitation in the workplace.

Vermin Control

Every enclosed workplace must be constructed, equipped, and maintained, so far as reasonably practicable, to prevent the entrance or harborage of rodents, insects, and other vermin. A continuing and effective extermination program must be instituted where they are detected.

Eating and Drinking Areas

All employee food service facilities and operations must be carried out according to sound hygienic principles. In all places of employment where all or part of the food service is provided, the food dispensed must be wholesome, not spoiled, and needs to be processed, prepared, handled, and stored in such a manner to be protected against contamination.

Water Supply, Both Potable and Non-Potable

An adequate supply of potable water must be provided in all places of employment.

The sanitation standard for general industry defines "potable water" as water that meets the standards for drinking purposes of the State or local authority having jurisdiction, or water that meets the quality standards prescribed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (40 CFR 141).

Outlets for **nonpotable** water, such as water for industrial or firefighting purposes, shall be posted or otherwise marked in a manner that will indicate clearly that the water is unsafe and is not to be used for drinking, washing of the person, cooking, washing of food, washing of cooking or eating utensils, washing of food preparation or processing premises, or personal service rooms, or for washing clothes.

Toilet and Washing Facilities

The sanitation standard is intended to ensure that employers provide employees with sanitary and available toilet facilities, so that employees will not suffer any adverse health effects that can result if toilets are not available when employees need them.

Sanitation

Toilet facilities

1. Toilet facilities, in toilet rooms separate for each sex, must be provided in numbers according to the table below.

Number of employees	Minimum number of water closets ¹
1 to 15.....	1
16 to 35.....	2
36 to 55.....	3
56 to 80.....	4
81 to 110.....	5
111 to 150.....	6
Over 150.....	(²)

¹ Where toilet facilities will not be used by women, urinals may be provided instead of water closets, except that the number of water closets in such cases must not be reduced to less than $\frac{2}{3}$ of the minimum specified.

² 1 additional fixture for each additional 40 employees.

2. Where toilet rooms will be occupied by no more than one person at a time, can be locked from the inside, and contain at least one water closet, separate toilet rooms for each sex need not be provided. These single occupancy rooms must count as one for the purpose of the table.
3. The sewage disposal method must not endanger the health of employees.
4. Each water closet must occupy a separate compartment with a door and walls or partitions between fixtures sufficiently high to assure privacy.

Washing facilities

1. Maintain washing facilities in a sanitary condition.
2. Provide lavatories with hot and cold running water, or tepid running water.
3. Provide hand soap or similar cleansing agents.
4. Provide individual hand towels or sections thereof, of cloth or paper, warm air blowers or clean individual sections of continuous cloth toweling, convenient to the lavatories.
5. Whenever showers are required by a particular regulation, the showers must be provided in accordance with these requirements:
 - One shower must be provided for each 10 employees of each sex, or numerical fraction thereof, who are required to shower during the same shift.
 - Provide body soap or other appropriate cleansing agents convenient to the showers.
 - Provide showers with hot and cold water feeding a common discharge line.
 - Provide employees who use showers with individual clean towels.

Change rooms

Whenever employees are required by a particular standard to wear protective clothing because of the possibility of contamination with toxic materials, provide change rooms equipped with storage facilities for street clothes and separate storage facilities for the protective clothing.

Sanitation



To Illustrate

An OSHA inspector visited a warehouse only to find:

- The toilet room was not separate for each sex, nor was the room provided with an adequate lock capable of being locked from the inside;
- The lavatory sink was not provided with hot or tepid water; and
- The lavatory was not provided with individual hand towels nor a warm air blower.

The three items violated §1910.141(c)(1)(i), (d)(2)(ii), and (d)(2)(iv), respectively. However, the citation indicates that the warehouse was able to correct the violations during the inspection, so no penalty was proposed.

FAQs

Can employees eat food in their work area?

OSHA states at 1910.141(g)(2) that, “No employee shall be allowed to consume food or beverages in a toilet room nor in any area exposed to a toxic material.”

If a work area contains toxic materials, then OSHA specifically prohibits consumption of food in such areas. OSHA’s definition of “toxic material” is located at 1910.141(a)(2), which says that toxic material means “a material in concentration or amount which exceeds the applicable limit established by a standard, such as 1910.1000 and 1910.1001 or, in the absence of an applicable standard, which is of such toxicity so as to constitute a recognized hazard that is causing or is likely to cause death or serious physical harm.”

Aside from the issue of toxic materials, many other questions arise when dealing with food in the workplace. If employees are working around moving parts, would eating or drinking cause a distraction that could be dangerous to themselves or other workers? Could spills or garbage cause slip hazards? It is best to take a practical approach when considering the issue. Also consider:

- Liquids around electrical equipment,
- Pest and vermin attraction,
- Lack of a suitable eating area,
- Company safety and health policies, and
- Machine interference.

Ultimately, an employer must determine – based on the specific work operation – whether or not to allow food and drink in work areas that do not fall under the requirement described in 1910.141(g)(2).

Sanitation

Employees have requested water be available to them in their work area. There is a cafeteria close by that has water. Is this enough? Also, can we install drinking fountains or allow water bottles?

OSHA requires that potable drinking water be provided in all places of employment under 1910.141(b). If the water in a cafeteria is potable, you have fulfilled this requirement as OSHA does not specify where the potable water must be provided in relation to production areas or processes.

If an employer chooses to provide an additional source of potable water, OSHA requires under 1910.141(b)(1)(iii) that, “portable drinking water dispensers shall be designed, constructed, and serviced so that sanitary conditions are maintained, shall be capable of being closed, and shall be equipped with a tap.” While a water fountain is not strictly prohibited per the standard (as it is not “portable”), an employer may have difficulty maintaining sanitary conditions given the environmental conditions (e.g., dust) of certain work environments. On the other hand, a portable dispenser such as a cooler (equipped with a tap) would allow an employer to easily provide an additional potable water source to workers in a specific work area. Keep in mind that the cooler would have to be routinely cleaned to maintain sanitary conditions.

In addition, there is no prohibition against the use of water bottles, but each worker must have their own individual bottle as OSHA prohibits the use of a “common drinking cup or other common utensils” under 1910.141(b)(1)(v). This would also apply to the dispensing of water from a cooler as mentioned above.

How many restrooms must we provide for employees?

The number of restrooms that must be provided by an employer is dependent upon the number of employees of each sex as outlined in 1910.141(c)(1). For example, an employer with 81 to 110 female employees must provide a minimum of 5 water closets. A water closet is a toilet facility maintained within a restroom for the purpose of both defecation and urination and which is flushed with water.

How close must restrooms be located to employees?

A July 5, 1983, OSHA Letter of Interpretation says, “There are no specific distance or location requirements for toilet facilities in 29 CFR 1910.141(c). An employer is, however, expected to use reasonable judgment in evaluating the proximity of sanitary facilities to employees. If an employer provides the required toilet facilities for all employees in the same building and provides unobstructed free access to them, it appears the intent of the standard would be met; however, one floor serving 20 floors does not appear reasonable or appropriate.”

Inspections and Training: Required Inspections

Required General Industry OSHA Inspections At-A-Glance, Continued

What:	Inspect the following types of ladders for any visible defects that could cause employee injury: • Portable ladders, • Stepladders, • Stepstools, • Mobile ladder stands/platforms, and • Fixed ladders. All ladders must be maintained in a safe condition.
Recordkeeping:	None required.
Category:	Rope descent systems (1910.27)
	<u>Anchorage</u>
When:	Annually.
What:	A qualified person must inspect each anchorage to ensure it is capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds in any direction for each employee attached.
Recordkeeping:	A certification document must be generated by a qualified person for each anchorage inspection, as necessary, and at least every 10 years. Editor's Note: OSHA gave employers and building owners until Nov. 20, 2017, to comply with requirements for inspecting, testing, and certifying Rope Descent System (RDS) anchorages before any worker uses an RDS (§1910.27(b)(1)). However, due to a limited availability of qualified persons to inspect, test, and certify anchorages for RDS use, OSHA is providing employers and building owners additional time to comply with paragraph (b)(1), provided that employers and building owners can <u>demonstrate and document</u> they are exercising due diligence to come into compliance with the standard's requirements. Where building owners and employers have sufficiently demonstrated and documented such efforts, OSHA will exercise, on a case-by-case basis, enforcement discretion to not issue citations under §1910.27(b)(1). See the November 20, 2017, OSHA enforcement memo, "Enforcement Guidance for General Industry Rope Descent System (RDS) Anchorage Requirements," for details.
	<u>Rope descent systems</u>
When:	At the start of each work shift it is to be used.
What:	Inspect for: • Damage, and • Defects.
Recordkeeping:	None required.
Category:	Scaffolds (1910.27)
	<u>All scaffolds</u>
When:	Inspect: • Before each work shift, and • After any occurrence which could affect structural integrity.
What:	A competent person must inspect all scaffolds and scaffold components for any visible defects.
Recordkeeping:	None required.
	<u>Suspension scaffolds</u>
When:	Before use.
What:	A competent person must inspect direct connections. The supporting surfaces must be capable of supporting the loads to be imposed.
Recordkeeping:	None required.

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