

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER & BUSINESS SERVICES
Oregon Occupational Safety & Health Division

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 20, 1997

To: Standards & Technical Resources File

From: Mike Mitchell

Subject: Body Harness Flammability in Electrical Power Transmission Work

In answer to a question asked of David Wallis, Federal OSHA, Electrical Standards Section, Washington D.C. (202-219-8161), there is not a standard that requires body harnesses used by lineman or electrical workers to be inflammable. 1910.269(1)(6)(iii) prohibits the use of certain kinds of clothing when exposed to flames or electric arcs, but according to Mr. Wallis, this standard does not apply to harnesses. Clothing is apparel, while harnesses are P.P.E.

Mr. Wallis went on and stated that recent tests performed in Washington D.C. exposed harnesses to high voltage arcs for extended times. The harnesses did not burn and were still strong enough to adequately sustain shock loads (except for one) when tested in falls with test dummies. He remembered the brand name of Buckingham, but said that other harnesses were tested and that most harnesses are constructed of essentially the same materials.