

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
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May 07, 2019

Ben Leung
SFPUC Construction Management Bureau
525 Golden Gate Ave., 6th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94102
bleung@sfgov.org

RE: Title 8 sections 2946 and 1621.1 and work near overhead power lines

Dear Mr. Leung:

Thank you for your letter dated February 27, 2019, addressed to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) Research and Standards Safety Unit, requesting clarification regarding the requirements of title 8 sections 1612.1 and 2946 for working under and near overhead power lines.

Occupational safety and health requirements are set by title 8 of the California Code of Regulations. This letter explains some of those requirements and how they may apply to particular circumstances, but this letter is not a general interpretation of the regulations and it does not create new or remove existing employer obligations under title 8.

I have provided answers to your questions, below:

Question #1:

If the overhead power line is insulated, does the minimum clearance of 10' for operating boom type or hoisting equipment in Table A of § 1612.1 and Table 2 of §2946 still apply?

Response:

The minimum distances specified in sections 1612.1 and 2946 apply, regardless if a power line is insulated or not.

Question #2:

If the Cal/OSHA 10' clearance applies to insulated power lines, please clarify if boom type or hoisting equipment still need to meet the 10' clearance per Electrical Safety Orders §2946 when operating near insulated 120/240V service drops since Table 2 of §2946 only covers power lines from 600V to 50kV.

Response:

Section 2946 is a high-voltage electrical safety order and applies to power lines operating at voltages in excess of 600 volts. Therefore, this section would not apply to insulated service drops or other power lines operating at 120 volts or 240 volts.

Question #3:

If the Cal/OSHA 10' clearance applies to insulated power lines, please clarify if cranes and derricks still need to meet the 10' clearance for Construction Safety Orders § 1612.1 when operating near insulated 120/240V service drops.

Response:

Section 1612.1 applies to both-low voltage and high-voltage power lines. Therefore, the minimum clearances specified in section 1621.1 would apply to construction work when cranes or derricks are near insulated service drops or other power lines operating at 120 volts or 240 volts.

Question #4:

Have there been any Cal/OSHA decisions which granted reduction of the 10' working clearance from 600V-50kV power for boom type or hosting equipment? If so, could Cal/OSHA share these variances with the SFPUC?

Response:

There have been no variances that I am aware of that allowed clearances for cranes or other boom-type equipment less than those specified in sections 1612.1 and 2946.

Thank you for your interest in occupational safety and health. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Eric Berg

Eric Berg, Deputy Chief
Research & Standards

Cc: Jason Denning, Spencer Price
File; 2946