

The third controversy revolves around the statement that the tools shall be tested “.....unless the tool is made of FRP rod or foam-filled FRP tube and the employer can demonstrate that the tool has no defects that could cause it to fail in use.” Again in an effort to eliminate or minimize testing, some people are hanging their hats on this statement and interpret it to say that the tool only needs to be tested if defects are found during examination. This position doesn’t address the need to “demonstrate that the tool has no defects”. However, there are variations in how the OSHA regulations are enforced. The local compliance officer appears to be the first line of interpretation of the rules which results in the possibility of variations from one utility to another.

A clarification letter addressing these issues will be re-printed following the remainder of 1910.269(j)(2)

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(A)

Each tool shall be thoroughly examined for defects.

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(B)

If a defect or contamination that could adversely affect the insulating qualities or mechanical integrity of the live-line tool is found, the tool shall be repaired and refinished or shall be permanently removed from service. If no such defect or contamination is found, the tool shall be cleaned and waxed.

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(C)

The tool shall be tested in accordance with paragraphs (j)(2)(iii)(D) and (j)(2)(iii)(E) of this section under the following conditions:

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(C)(1)

After the tool has been repaired or refinished; and

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(C)(2)

After the examination if repair or refinishing is not performed, unless the tool is made of FRP rod or foam-filled FRP tube and the employer can demonstrate that the tool has no defects that could cause it to fail in use.

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(D)

The test method used shall be designed to verify the tool’s integrity along its entire working length and, if the tool is made of fiberglass-reinforced plastic, its integrity under wet conditions.

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(E)

The voltage applied during the tests shall be as follows:

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(E)(1)

75,000 volts per foot (2461 volts per centimeter) of length for 1 minute if the tool is made of fiberglass, or

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(E)(2)

50,000 volts per foot (1640 volts per centimeter) of length for 1 minute if the tool is made of wood, or

1910.269(j)(2)(iii)(E)(3)

Other tests that the employer can demonstrate are equivalent.

Note: Guidelines for the examination, cleaning, repairing, and in-service testing of live-line tools are contained in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Guide for In-Service Maintenance and Electrical Testing of Live-Line Tools, IEEE Std. 978-198