

1 NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
2 REVIEW BOARD
3

4 CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER
5 OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND
6 HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, DIVISION
7 OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OF THE
8 DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND
9 INDUSTRY,

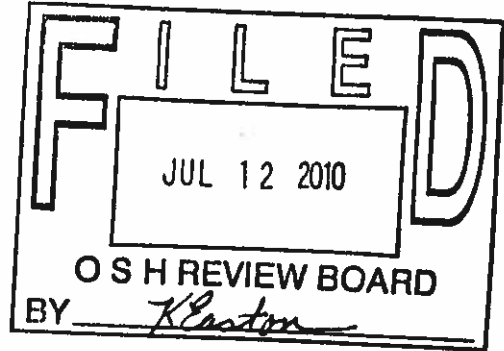
Docket No. LV 10-1387

Complainant,

vs.

10 SME STEEL CONTRACTORS, INC.,

Respondent.



11
12
13 DECISION

14 This matter having come before the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND**
15 **HEALTH REVIEW BOARD** at a hearing commenced on the 9th day of June 2010,
16 and reconvened on June 10, 2010, in furtherance of notice duly provided
17 according to law, MR. JOHN WILES, ESQ., counsel appearing on behalf of
18 the Complainant, **Chief Administrative Officer of the Occupational Safety**
19 **and Health Administration, Division of Industrial Relations (OSHA)**; and
20 MR. JOEL F. HANSEN, ESQ., appearing on behalf of Respondent, **SME Steel**
21 **Contractors, Inc.** the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD**
22 finds as follows:

23 Jurisdiction in this matter has been conferred in accordance with
24 Nevada Revised Statute 618.315.

25 The complaint filed by the OSHA sets forth allegations of violation
26 of Nevada Revised Statutes as referenced in Exhibit "A", attached
27 thereto.

28 Citation 1, Item 1 charges a "Serious" violation of Nevada Revised

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1 Statute 618.375(1). Complainant alleges the respondent violated the
2 cited Nevada Revised Statute commonly known as the "general duty
3 clause". Employees were tied off to the top portion of a guardrail
4 system on an elevated working platform but not to anchor point as
5 designated by the manufacturer. The violation was classified as Serious
6 due to the potential for serious injury or death. The proposed penalty
7 for the serious violation is in the amount of ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED
8 DOLLARS (\$1,500.00).

9 Citation 1, Item 2, charges a violation of 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17).
10 The complainant alleges the employer did not ensure that a body harness
11 was worn in accordance with the proscriptions of the standard. The body
12 harness attachment point was not located in the center of an employee
13 wearer's back and near the shoulder level. The violation was classified
14 as Serious due to the potential for serious injury or death. The
15 proposed penalty for the serious violation is in the amount of ONE
16 THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,500.00).

17 Citation 1, Item 3, charges a violation of 29 CFR 1926.760(a)(1).
18 The complainant alleges the employer did not ensure employees near the
19 edge of elevated metal decking were protected from a fall hazard of
20 approximately 20 feet. The violation was classified as Serious due to
21 the potential for serious injury or death. The proposed penalty is in
22 the amount of ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE DOLLARS
23 (\$1,875.00).

24 Counsel for the Chief Administrative Officer presented testimony
25 and documentary evidence with regard to the alleged violations. Safety
26 and Health Representative (SHR) Tanisha Solano testified that she
27 conducted an assigned comprehensive inspection of the employer's
28 worksite located at Terminal 3 of the McCarran Airport in Las Vegas,

1 Nevada. She identified and introduced Exhibit A, pages 1-23 as her
2 inspection/investigation report, Exhibit B comprising photographs taken
3 by her at the site, numbered 1-7, and Exhibit C, a printout of the type
4 of ariel work platform involved in Citation 1, Item 1.

5 At Citation 1, Item 1, Ms. Solano testified she observed two
6 employees connected by their safety line attachment (hooked off) to the
7 top guardrail of an ariel work platform (boom lift). She pointed to the
8 location of attachment by the employees at Exhibit C and indicated same
9 to be the top rail near the work panel. During the investigation she
10 obtained the manufacturer requirements for recommended tie-off points.
11 The top guardrail identified was not permitted for such use. She
12 referenced pages 11, 12 and 13 of Exhibit A and testified she spoke to
13 Mr. Steven Best, a company engineer for the manufacturer of the subject
14 ariel work platform. She determined from her discussions, research and
15 investigation the specific anchor points for tie-off rated by the
16 manufacturer did not include the top rail. She testified the top rail
17 had not been tested to withstand the weight and pressure necessary to
18 protect employees tied off to same as a safety line attachment point.
19 She testified the recognized hazard is the potential of a fall due to
20 tie-off to an insufficient weight bearing anchor point.

21 Ms. Solano testified from Exhibit A, pages 14 and 15 with regard
22 to employer knowledge of the violative conditions cited at Item 1. She
23 determined the written disciplinary notice for two employees, Messrs.
24 Anaya and Burt established the hazard was **recognized**. Statements at page
25 9, Exhibit A confirm employer knowledge of the improper actions of its
26 employees incorrect attachment of the safety lines. Ms. Solano
27 testified the employees were supervised by a respondent foreman,
28 superintendent and several levels of safety management on the site. She

1 confirmed her investigative information that the foreman was on the job
2 site at least twice during the day of the inspection.

3 Exhibit D was admitted in evidence without objection for the
4 purposes of reflecting at pages 1-6 the SHR notes taken during the
5 inspection. She testified from Exhibit D that employee Anaya signed a
6 statement admitting he was tied off to the top rail while working for
7 approximately one hour. The SHR referenced the feasibility of
8 enforcement and compliance and testified the violation was readily
9 observable in plain view had the supervisors performed their job to
10 assure proper safety line attachment.

11 At Citation 1, Item 2, referencing 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17), SHR
12 Solano testified she cited the employer for a violation of the specific
13 standard governing safety harness fit and wear based upon her
14 observations as confirmed by photographic evidence at Exhibit B, pages
15 1 and 2. She testified that based upon her training and recognized
16 interpretation of the referenced standard, the harnesses worn by
17 observed employees were improperly fitted and worn because the
18 attachment point of the harness was not located in the center of the
19 wearer's back near shoulder level. She further testified the recognized
20 hazard for an improper fitted harness consisted of potential greater
21 injury inflicted on an employee after a fall due to swinging and/or
22 harmful contact with other objects. Employees should be suspended in
23 a vertical position after a fall rather than being cast horizontally
24 which could cause body parts to come in contact with the lift equipment
25 or other obstructions. Ms. Solano referenced Exhibit A page 20 to
26 establish employer knowledge of the standard on proper fit and wearing
27 of a harness. The SHR read the applicable regulations into the record.
28 She referenced pages 14 and 15 at Exhibit A as the employer disciplinary

1 action resultant from the employee conduct to support employer knowledge
2 of the proper way to fit and wear a harness. She further testified in
3 support of her classification of the violation as serious and the
4 appropriate penalty calculations.

5 At Citation 1, Item 3, SHR Solano cited the employer for a
6 violation of 29 CFR 1926.760(a)(1). She testified that on the second
7 day of her initial inspection (July 13, 2009) while continuing her "walk
8 around" of the site, she observed respondent employees exposed to a fall
9 hazard and photographed them as depicted in Exhibit B, page 4. She said
10 they appeared to be on break and seated near the edge of metal roof
11 decking and exposed to holes in the deck with a potential fall hazard
12 of approximately 20 feet in height. She testified from Exhibit D, page
13 6 that respondent employee Shawn Salsberry told her he tied off to a
14 beam and the scissor lift to climb onto the decking in order to take a
15 work break. Various safety and other management employees of respondent
16 were regularly on the site. Ms. Solano testified the employer
17 supervisory and safety representatives should have readily noted the
18 exposed employees on the deck because the violative conduct occurred in
19 plain view. She described the potential hazards from a fall of 20 feet
20 in height and explained her penalty calculations in accordance with the
21 enforcement manual.

22 Counsel for the complainant presented testimony from Mr. Gregg
23 Masnick, respondent safety manager. Mr. Masnick testified as to Exhibit
24 A, pages 14 and 16. He identified the documents as company discipline
25 forms utilized and corporate records of infractions for serious
26 violations. The documents reflected employees Anaya and Burt had
27 received written warnings at the McCarran job on June 16, 2009. He
28 testified on the company reporting system for violations and those

1 issued to employees Anaya and Burt. Mr. Masnick also testified there
2 was no hazard demonstrated by the employees' attachment to the top rail
3 of the ariel working platform as charged at Citation 1, Item 1.

4 Respondent conducted cross-examination of SHR Solano. She
5 testified the boom lift is equipped with designated anchor points for
6 tie-off. She admitted the employer did furnish safe equipment for
7 employee use at the job site but cited respondent at Item 1 because
8 employees did not utilize the anchor points designated by the
9 manufacturer which were specifically tested and rated for tie-off
10 protection. She testified employee Burt admitted at page 4, Exhibit D
11 that he tied off to the top rail in violation of the employer work rule.
12 Ms. Solano admitted on further cross-examination that an employer cannot
13 assure employee compliance with safety regulations every moment of the
14 work day.

15 At Citation 1, Item 2, counsel questioned SHR Solano extensively
16 as to the meaning of the standard and her interpretation of location of
17 the harness attachment ring and fitting "near the shoulders." She
18 testified the simple meaning is as she described the phrase ". . . near
19 the shoulders . . ." and not at the lower area worn by the employees
20 subject of citation.

21 Ms. Solano responded to cross-examination as to Citation 1, Item
22 3. She admitted the employees observed were apparently on a break and
23 not actually engaged in work at the time of obtaining the photographic
24 evidence.

25 Respondent presented testimony and evidence in defense of the
26 citations and alleged violations. Counsel conducted direct examination
27 of respondent safety manager, Gregg Masnick. Various exhibits were
28 identified and entered in evidence by stipulation. Mr. Masnick

1 testified he spent 90% of his day looking for safety violations to
2 provide employee oversight. At Citation 1, Item 2, he testified
3 employees were trained in safety harness use but that OSHA has no
4 guidelines on "near the shoulder" or a clear definition. He testified
5 that in his opinion the photos in evidence depict the harness positioned
6 between shoulder blades and therefore no violation. At Citation 1, Item
7 3, Mr. Masnick testified that as safety manager, he verbally disciplined
8 the employees sitting too close to the edge when the photo was taken
9 after he observed them along with the SHR. He testified the employees
10 dismissed his discipline and advisories, stating they were not working
11 but rather "on break," and not required to observe fall hazard
12 protection.

13 Mr. Don Bidlock provided evidence and testimony on behalf of
14 respondent. He identified himself as the welding foreman on the job
15 site subject of inspection. He testified all respondent employees were
16 trained in safety by the employer and iron workers union. All were
17 experienced in the job tasks underway. He further testified there were
18 two safety managers on the job site. The three employees depicted at
19 Exhibit B, page 4 and 5, were identified and Mr. Bidlock testified all
20 three had been trained in safety, and in fact participated in a training
21 session the very morning of the inspection. He further testified the
22 training provided to the employees repeatedly included remaining away
23 from the edge of open holes. He testified the three employees depicted
24 in the exhibit and disciplined for their action advised him they did not
25 have to obey various safety rules during a break. He said the employees
26 violated company policy and were engaged in employee misconduct.

27 Mr. Jason Faltinowski testified he is the respondent safety manager
28 with five years field experience and recipient of a BA degree in OSHA

1 from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He testified on the extent
2 and breadth the existent respondent safety program. He trained
3 employees to use tie-off points on boom lifts. The tie-off points
4 differ from lift to lift dependent upon the manufacturer. He testified
5 that if he had seen employees tied off to the top rail as depicted in
6 the Exhibit he would have stopped their work.

7 Mr. Faltinowski testified that Exhibit B, pictures 1 and 2 do not
8 demonstrate any violation of Citation 1, Item 3 with regard to shoulder
9 harness wear because there is no specific definition of "near the
10 shoulder".

11 Counsel for complainant called Mr. Nicholas LaFronz as a rebuttal
12 witness. Mr. LaFronz identified himself as an SHR and provided
13 testimony based upon his education, training, experience and
14 interpretation of the proper fit and wear of a body harness. He
15 testified as to dictionary definitions of "near the shoulder" or
16 "location of shoulder" and the basic apparent meaning of the standard.
17 He stated the proper fit is widely interpreted in furtherance of that
18 given by SHR Solano to support respondent's violation of the standard.
19 He further testified as to the hazards that could result from a fall
20 with an improperly fitted and attached harness.

21 Counsel for complainant and respondent provided closing argument
22 asserting positions with regard to facts, testimony and interpretations
23 of law or standards upon which the citations were based.

24 Counsel for complainant argued the burden of proof was met as to
25 each cited violation based upon credible witness testimony and
26 documentary exhibits in evidence. He further argued the "plain meaning
27 rule" supports the OSHA interpretation for proper fitting and wearing
28 of the safety harness.

1 Complainant counsel asserted that safety rules under established
2 occupational safety and health law must be enforced by an employer when
3 employees are exposed to hazards, whether they are engaged in their work
4 task or on break.

5 Counsel for respondent argued the respondent maintained a safety
6 program and rigorously enforced same. He asserted the employees subject
7 of cited violations were all engaged in employee misconduct which
8 prevents any finding of violations even if sufficient evidence could be
9 found to satisfy the burden of proof in the first instance. He further
10 argued there was no violation of the general duty clause because there
11 was no unsafe workplace shown or demonstrated by any of the evidence,
12 documentary or testimonial. Counsel charged erroneous OSHA
13 interpretation of the harness standard under the plain meaning rule, and
14 the standard itself is constitutionally void for vagueness due to the
15 inability of reasonable men to accurately interpret an objective
16 meaning.

17 The board in reviewing the facts, documentation, testimony and
18 other evidence must measure same against the established applicable law
19 developed under the Occupational Safety & Health Act.

20 A serious violation can be established under Nevada occupational
21 safety and health law in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes.

22 (NRS) 618.625(2) provides:

23 ...a serious violation exists in a place of
24 employment if there is a substantial probability
25 that death or serious physical harm could result
26 from a condition which exists or from one or more
27 practices, means, methods, operations or processes
28 which have been adopted or are in use at the place
of employment unless the employer did not and could
not, with the exercise of reasonable diligence,
know of the presence of the violation.

N.A.C. 618.788(1) provides:

1 In all proceedings commenced by the filing of a
2 notice of contest, the burden of proof rests with
the Administrator.

3 All facts forming the basis of a complaint must be
4 proved by a preponderance of the evidence. See
Armor Elevator Co., 1 OSHC 1409, 1973-1974 OSHC
5 ¶16,958 (1973).

6 To establish a prima facie case, the Secretary
7 (Chief Administrative Officer) must prove the
8 existence of a violation, the exposure of
9 employees, the reasonableness of the abatement
period, and the appropriateness of the penalty.
See Bechtel Corporation, 2 OSHC 1336, 1974-1975
OSHD ¶18,906 (1974); Crescent Wharf & Warehouse
Co., 1 OSHC 1219, 1971-1973 OSHD ¶15,047. (1972).

10 At Citation 1, Item 1, complainant cited respondent for a violation
11 of NRS 618.375(1) commonly known as the "general duty clause". The
12 evidence did not show the respondent maintained a generally unsafe
13 worksite, however employee safety line tie-offs to a non-rated top
14 guardrail demonstrated exposure to a potential fall hazard.
15 Notwithstanding the unsafe tie-off and exposure to hazard, Congress in
16 the United States Code and well-established law developed under the
17 Occupational Safety and Health Act prevents an employer from being cited
18 under the general duty clause when a specific standard is applicable to
19 the facts. Complainant cited the respondent under the general duty
20 clause notwithstanding the existence of the specific applicable standard
21 governing anchoring attachments at 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15). The standard
22 provides:

23 Anchorages used for attachment of personal fall
24 arrest equipment shall be independent of any
25 anchorage being used to support or suspend
26 platforms and capable of supporting at least 5,000
pounds (22.2kN) per employee attached, or shall be
designed, installed and used ...

27 A citation will be vacated if the cited condition is regulated by
28 a more specifically applicable standard.

1 29 C.F.R. §1910.5(c) E.g., McNally Constr &
2 Tunneling CO., 16 OSH Cases 1886 (Rev. Comm'n
3 1994), aff'd and approved, 71 F3d 208, 17 OSH Cases
4 1412 (6th Cir. 1995); Bratton Corp., 14 OSH Cases
5 1893 (Rev. Comm'n 1990) (steel erection standards
6 to not preempt general fall protection standards)
7 (acceding to view of several circuits); New England
8 Tel. & Tel. Co., 8 OSH Cases 1478 (Rev. Comm'n
9 1980).

10 It has long been established under Occupational Safety and Health
11 Law that the provisions of 29 CFR 1910.5(f) to be the preemption clause
12 which provides in effect that a standard may preempt the general duty
13 clause. The commission has long held, based in part on this regulation
14 and in part on its view of congressional intent, that a standard will
15 preempt the (general duty) clause.

16 Brisk Waterproofing CO., 1 OSH Cases 1263 (1973);
17 Daniel Int'l, Inc., 10 OSH Cases 1556 (1982);
18 Morrison-Knudsen Co./Yonkers Contracting Co., Joint
19 Venture, 16 OSH Cases 1105, 1120-21 (Rev. Comm'n
20 1993).

21 Sawnee Electric Membership Corporation, 5 OSHC
22 1059, 1977-1978 OSHD ¶ 21,560 (1977); Tolar
23 Construction Co., 2 OSHC 1385, 1974-1975 OSHD
24 ¶ 19,078 (1974); Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Co.,
25 1 OSHC 1381, 1973-1974 OSHD ¶ 16,725 (1973).

26 Nevada Revised Statutes have adopted applicable Federal law
27 promulgated under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. NRS
28 618.295(8) provides:

All federal occupational safety and health
standards which the Secretary of Labor promulgates,
modifies or revokes, and any amendments thereto,
shall be deemed Nevada occupational safety and
health standards unless the Division, in accordance
with federal law, adopts regulations establishing
alternative standards and provide protection equal
to the protection provided by those federal
occupational safety and health standards.

NRS 618.305(4) provides:

The Division may consider the following sources in
adopting standards under this Chapter . . . 4.
Code of Federal regulations (CFR).

1 29 U.S.C. § 658(a) provides:

2 Each citation shall be in writing and shall
3 describe with particularity the nature of the
4 violation, including a reference to the provision
of the Act, standard, rule, regulation, or order
alleged to have been violated.

5 The purpose of ¶ 658(a) is to ". . . place the
6 cited employer on notice of the nature of the
alleged violation."

7 The evidence in the record demonstrates the employer did maintain
8 a safety program and conducted both training and discipline for the
9 subject employees referenced at Citation 1, Item 1. However the board
10 need not reach the issue of unforeseeable employee misconduct for what
11 could have been an isolated incident difficult to readily observe
12 because of the threshold prohibition of citing an employer under the
13 general duty clause when a specific standard applies.

14 At Citation 1, Item 2, referencing 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17), the
15 testimony and evidence centered on a disputed interpretation of the
16 harness standard. SHRs Solano and LaFronz testified appropriate wear
17 of the body harness is at the center of the back near the shoulders as
18 previously interpreted by this board and the federal Occupational Safety
19 and Health Review Commission. Respondent safety representatives Messrs.
20 Masnick and Faltinowski testified the harness as depicted in Exhibit B,
21 pages 1 and 2 were appropriately worn, fitted and not in violation of
22 the standard. The testimony presented by Mr. Masnick as to proper fit
23 and wear in defense of the citation was argumentative and evasive.
24 Statutory interpretation under the "plain meaning rule" established by
25 the United States Supreme Court is a well-recognized precedent in the
26 State of Nevada. This board has followed the plain meaning rule when
27 required to interpret standards and law.

28 Caminetti v. United States, 242 U.S. 470, 485, 37

1 S.Ct. 192, 194, 61 L.Ed. 442 (1916) (citations
2 omitted). Rodgers v. Rodgers, 110 Nev. 1370, 1373,
3 887 P.2d 269, 271 (1994) (words in statute should
4 be given their plain meaning unless spirit of act
5 is violated.) Sheriff v. Encoe, 110 Nev. 1317,
6 1319, 885 P.2d 596 (1994) (proper construction of
7 statute is legal question rather than factual
8 question). Neal v. Griepentrog, 108 Nev. 660, 664,
9 837 P.2d 432, 434 (1992) (words in statute should
10 be given their plain meaning unless this violates
11 spirit of act).

12 The description of "center of back . . . near the shoulder . . ."
13 has a sufficiently plain meaning and not so vague that reasonable people
14 could be confused. Further, the recognized hazard described by SHR
15 LaFronz supports his interpretation of the wear and fit to be such to
16 keep an employee vertical. The "D ring" centered at the back and the
17 straps at what are commonly considered the shoulder upper area make the
18 phrase "near the shoulder" logical and sufficiently clear. The terms
19 "center of the back . . . and near the shoulder" reflects that the
20 harness should **not** be worn as that depicted in Exhibit B, pages 1 and
21 2. If the subject employees fell, it is reasonable to infer one could
22 dangle or swing horizontally. This is a reasonable inference and a
23 major aspect of the potential hazard intended by Congress to be
24 protected.

25 While it might have been arguable that the employees observed,
26 photographed and cited had loosened their harnesses or relaxed the fit
27 during the photographs, the testimony of respondent safety managers
28 Masnick and Faltinowski was that the harnesses were in fact properly
fitted as depicted in the photo and not in violation of the standard.
Further, Mr. Faltinowski testified as to Exhibit B, Page 1 and the photo
that the employee depicted was wearing the harness as shown the ". . .
same as when . . . working off the boom lift . . ." The facts
demonstrate the harness was fitted and worn contrary to with the

1 proscriptions of the standard and the plain meaning interpretation made
2 Nevada OSHA and that utilized by federal OSHA enforcement personnel to
3 assure appropriate safety compliance.

4 At Citation 1, Item 3, referencing 29 CFR 1926.760(a)(1), the facts
5 and evidence clearly demonstrated employees exposed to a hazardous fall
6 condition intended to be protected by the applicable standard.

7 Respondent witnesses and legal counsel admit the employees to be
8 in a violative posture, but assert the recognized defense of
9 **unpreventable employee misconduct**. While the employer demonstrated the
10 existence of a safety program and general enforcement, it carries the
11 burden of proof to establish and prove the defense under established
12 case law guidelines by a preponderance of evidence. This board has
13 previously relied upon federal court and established OSHRC case law
14 which provides that for an employer to prevail on the defense of
15 unpreventable employee misconduct, it must meet its burden of proof by
16 a preponderance of evidence that despite established safety policies in
17 a safety program which is effectively communicated and enforced, the
18 conduct of its employees in violating the policy was unforeseeable,
19 unpreventable or an isolated event.

20 Evidence that the employer effectively communicated
21 and enforced safety policies to protect against the
22 hazard permits an inference that the employer
23 justifiably relied on its employees to comply with
24 the applicable safety rules and that violations of
25 these safety policies were not **foreseeable or**
26 **preventable**. Austin Bldg. Co. v. Occupational
27 Safety & Health Review Comm., 647 F.2d 1063, 1068
28 (10th Cir. 1981). (emphasis added)

25 When an employer proves that it has effectively
26 communicated and enforced its safety policies,
27 serious citations are dismissed. See Secretary of
28 Labor v. Consolidated Edison Co., 13 O.S.H. Cas.
(BNA) 2107 (OSHRC Jan. 11, 1989); Secretary of
Labor v. General Crane Inc., 13 O.S.H. Cas. (BNA)
1608 (OSHRC Jan. 19, 1988); Secretary of Labor v.

1 Greer Architectural Prods. Inc., 14 O.S.H. Cas.
2 (BNA) 1200 (OSHRC July 3, 1989).

3 An employer has the affirmative duty to anticipate
4 and protect against **preventable** hazardous conduct
5 by employees. Leon Construction Co., 3 OSHC 1979,
6 1975-1976 OSHD ¶ 20,387 (1976). **Employee**
7 **misbehavior, standing alone, does not relieve an**
8 **employer.** Where the Secretary shows the existence
9 of violative conditions, an employer may defend by
10 showing that the employee's behavior was a
11 deviation from a uniformly and **effectively enforced**
12 **work rule**, of which deviation the employer had
13 neither actual **nor constructive** knowledge. A. J.
14 McNulty & Co., Inc., 4 OSHC 1097, 1975-1976 OSHD ¶
15 20,600 (1976). (emphasis added)

16 In furtherance of the tests in the established case law, while the
17 respondent employer did maintain general work rules and a safety program
18 designed to prevent violations, it failed to **effectively** enforce safety
19 rules sufficient to avoid violation. Respondent did not **adequately**
20 communicate safety policies and rules in its work practice to employees
21 for safely carrying out the job. Respondent did not take meaningful
22 steps to **discover** violations which were easily observable through
23 supervisory representatives on the construction site. The defense of
24 unpreventable employee misconduct must fail because the violative
25 conditions were readily foreseeable in plain view and reasonably
26 preventable. Adequate communication and **meaningfully** enforced work
27 rules would have prevented the violative conditions and the citations.

28 See Jensen Construction Co., 7 OSHC 1477, 1979 OSHD ¶23,664 (1979).
29 Accord, Marson Corp., 10 OSHC 2128, 1980 OSHC 1045 ¶24,174 (1980).

30 These cases make clear the existence of an
31 employer's defense for the unforeseeable
32 disobedience of an employee who violates the
33 specific duty clause. However, the disobedience
34 defense will fail if the employer does not
35 **effectively communicate and conscientiously enforce**
36 **the safety program at all times.** Even when a
37 **safety program is thorough and properly conceived,**
38 **lax administration renders it ineffective.** P.

1 Gioioso & Sons, Inc. v. OSHRC, 115 F.3d 100, 110-
2 111 (1st Cir. 1997). Although the mere occurrence
3 of a safety violation does not establish
4 ineffective enforcement, Secretary of Labor v.
5 Raytheon Constructors Inc., 19 O.S.H.C. 1311, 1314
6 (2000) the employer must show that it took adequate
7 steps to discover violations of its work rules and
8 an effective system to detect unsafe conditions
9 control. Secretary of Labor v. Fishel Co., 18
10 O.S.H.C. 1530, 1531 (1998). Failure to follow
11 through and to require employees to abide by safety
12 standards should be evidence that disciplinary
13 action against disobedient employees progressed to
14 levels of punishment designed to provide
15 deterrence. *Id.* See also, Secretary of Labor v.
16 A&W Construction Services, Inc., 19 O.S.H.C. 1659,
17 1664 (2001); Secretary of Labor v. Raytheon
18 Constructors Inc., 19 O.S.H.C. 1311, 1314 (2000).
19 A disciplinary program consisting solely of verbal
20 warnings is insufficient. Secretary of Labor v.
21 Reynolds Inc., 19 O.S.H.C. 1653, 1657 (2001);
22 Secretary of Labor v. Dayton Hudson Corp., 19
23 O.S.H.C. 1045, 1046 (2000). Similarly, disciplinary
24 action that occurs long after the violation was
25 committed may be found ineffective. (emphasis
26 added)

27 Arguments for lack of applicability of the safety standards cited
28 at Item 3 to employees on a break during their work shift does not
constitute a recognized defense under occupational safety & health law.

In Gilles & Cotting, Inc., 3 OSHC 2002, 1975-1976
OSHD ¶ 20,448 (1976); The Commission rejected the
need to show actual exposure in favor of a **rule of
access** based upon reasonable predictability: (1)
the zone of danger to be determined by the hazard;
(2) access to mean that employees either while in
the course of assigned duties, **personal comfort
activities** on the job, or while in the normal means
of ingress-egress will be, are, or have been **in the
zone of danger**; and (3) the employer knew or could
have known of its employees' presence so it could
have warned the employees or prevented them from
entering the zone of danger. See also, Cornell &
Company, Inc., 5 OSHC 1736, 1977-1978 OSHD ¶ 22,095
(1977). (emphasis added)

Based upon the above and foregoing, it is the decision of the
NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD that no violation of
Nevada Revised Statutes did occur as to Citation 1, Item 1, NRS

1 618.375(1), the general duty clause, and the proposed penalty is denied.

2 It is the further decision of the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND**
3 **HEALTH REVIEW BOARD** that violations of Nevada Revised Statutes did occur
4 as to Citation 1, Item 2, 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(17) and Citation 1, Item
5 3, 29 CFR 1926.760(a)(1). The violations were appropriately classified
6 as serious and the proposed penalties of ONE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED
7 DOLLARS (\$1,500.00) and ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY-FIVE THOUSAND
8 DOLLARS (\$1,875.00) respectively for a total of THREE THOUSAND THREE
9 HUNDRED SEVENTY FIVE DOLLARS (\$3,375.00) are reasonable and confirmed.

10 The Board directs counsel for the complainant, **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE**
11 **OFFICER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ENFORCEMENT SECTION,**
12 **DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS,** to submit proposed Findings of Fact
13 and Conclusions of Law to the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**
14 **REVIEW BOARD** and serve copies on opposing counsel within twenty (20)
15 days from date of decision. After five (5) days time for filing any
16 objection, the final Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law shall be
17 submitted to the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD** by
18 prevailing counsel. Service of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of
19 Law signed by the Chairman of the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**
20 **REVIEW BOARD** shall constitute the Final Order of the **BOARD**.

21 DATED: This 12th day of July 2010.

22 NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
23 REVIEW BOARD

24 By /s/
25 TIM JONES, Chairman

