# NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD

INDUSTRY,

vs.

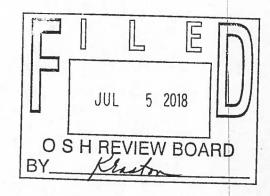
PERFORMANCE BUILDERS, INC.,

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND

Respondent,

Docket No. LV 17-1907



#### DECISION

Complainant,

This matter having come before the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD at a hearing commenced on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February 2018, in furtherance of notice duly provided according to law, MS. SALLI ORTIZ, ESQ., counsel appearing on behalf of the Complainant, Chief Administrative Officer of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Division of Industrial Relations (OSHA); and MR. RICK ROSKELLEY, ESQ., appearing on behalf of Respondent, Performance Builders, Inc., the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD finds as follows:

Jurisdiction in this matter has been conferred in accordance with Chapter 618 of the Nevada Revised Statutes.

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

Citation 1, Item 1, charges a violation of 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4), which provides:

29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4). Where uplift can occur which would displace scaffold end frames or panels, the frames or panels shall be locked together vertically by pins or equivalent means.

# NVOSHA alleged:

At the Pinecrest Inspirada Academy, located at 2840 Via Contessa Road in Henderson, Nevada, employees were lathing a new building on the southeast side while working from a five-tiered fabricated frame scaffold that was not locked together vertically by pins or equivalent means. On the day of the inspection, wind gusts were approximately 31 mph contributing to potential uplift. The employees were exposed to a fall hazard of approximately 10 to 35 feet to the gravel surface below, which could result in broken bones and up to death.

The violation was classified as "Willful." The proposed penalty for the alleged violation is in the amount of FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$44,000.00).

Complainant and respondent stipulated to the admission of documentary evidence identified as complainant Exhibits 1 through 3; and respondent exhibits identified as Tabs 1 through 5. It was also stipulated that respondent employer made the direct decision not to use locking pins as the scaffolding was being utilized because they did not believe it was necessary.

Both counsel waived opening statements.

## **FACTS**

At Citation 1, Item 1, a single violation was documented during the inspection of the subject construction site identified in the allegations to the complaint. The original Certified Safety and Health Officer (CSHO) Mr. Mark Nester conducted the inspection and reporting, however no longer employed by NVOSHES. Mr. Jamal Sayegh

was identified as the NVOSHES supervisor who reviewed the evidence, citation process and the responsible complainant witness to support the violations.

The narrative reports and photographic exhibits stipulated in evidence describe an initial inspection on February 8, 2017 based upon a "referral" complaint.

The subject work site was occupied by employers and employees other than those of respondent and designated a multi-employer work site as defined under recognized Federal and NVOSHA enforcement policy.

During inspection, the CSHO observed that "locking pins" were missing on sides of respondent scaffolding. The CSHO recommended issuance of a citation based upon his determination that high wind gusts were reported at approximately 31 mph, and ". . . work trucks driving around the scaffold on the jobsite which could potentially contribute to displacement or separation of the scaffold frame components if the scaffold were struck by the equipment . . "

The respondent contends the cited standard does not require all scaffold be affixed with locking pins. The employer intentionally did not use locking pins based upon belief they were not required by the work site conditions. The complainant agrees there are no specific requirements in the standard itself for "pinning" scaffolding due to winds, or other specific conditions. Both respondent and complainant agree that it is the responsibility of the employer and a qualified competent person (as defined through occupational safety and health law) in charge of the scaffolding erection/design to determine whether unsafe conditions exist which warrant and/or require pinning. Both parties also agreed that the OSHA required conditions for pinning are

based upon ". . . where uplift may occur . . ."

It is undisputed that the ANSI A10.8-2011 provides industry consensus recommendations for utilizing locking pins. ANSI guidance is based upon the criteria from the standard which provides "Where uplift can occur which would displace scaffold end frames or panels, the frames or panels shall be locked together vertically by pins or equivalent means." [1926.452(c)(4)]

Both parties agree that conditions warranting pinning include, but are not limited to: attaching other materials or equipment that may create stress on the scaffolding structure, utilizing hoisting equipment to lift materials up to the working platform, wrapping the scaffolding in weather proof plastic or tarp materials which could capture winds, construction equipment operating on the site near or in areas which may permit contact with the scaffolding, use of a forklift to lift materials up to the employees working on the scaffolding from the work platform.

The inspector recommended citation for a **serious** violation of the subject standard, based upon the lack of scaffold locking pins where there was potential for uplift and exposure to fall hazards from the height of the working platform resulting in serious injury or death. After the initial citation was issued, it was recalled and a new citation issued increasing the classification from "Serious" to "Willful". The increased classification resulted in additional penalties for a total proposed at \$44,000.00.

Complainant counsel referenced witness testimony and the inspector CSHO reportings in evidence will be offered through Mr. Jamal Sayegh, NVOSHES supervisor.

Respondent counsel referenced expected witness testimony and

documents in evidence from Ms. Laura Sorensen, company co-owner, Mr. Jose Manual Rangel, company foreman, and Mr. Kent Barber, a scaffold design engineer.

Respondent contends no pinning was required under the cited standard nor supported by any evidence of major wind conditions, vehicular traffic near the scaffolding, nor opinion of the company competent person. He identified testimony for presentation from the foreman in charge of the project work and scaffolding, Mr. Jose Manuel Rangel; and interview statements from employee Ruben Sanchez, the competent person qualified in scaffold safety. Respondent counsel also identified expected testimony of expert engineer Mr. Kent Barber to support respondent's position that pinning was not required under the standard nor were there other factual conditions warranting or requiring the utilizing of locking pins on the scaffolding.

## ISSUE

The issue before the Board on appeal is whether the respondent violated the cited standard, 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4), by failing to utilize locking pins on its scaffolding, despite the lack of any specific conditions requiring use listed in the standard. The particular condition requiring use of locking pins relied upon by the CSHO were his findings of approximate 31 mph winds reported at a nearby airport, and other work site factors contributing to potential uplift and displacement of the scaffolding.

#### DISCUSSION

Counsel for the Chief Administrative Officer presented witness testimony of Mr. Jamal Sayegh. He identified himself as the supervisor for the subject citation based upon the inspection conducted by former OSHA CSHO Mr. Mark Nester. He identified

complainant Exhibits 1 through 3, and referenced the exhibits during his testimony. Mr. Sayegh identified and explained the photographs including Exhibit 1, pages 56, 58, 59, 60, 61 and 62 as depicting the lack of locking pins in place on the scaffolding at the time of inspection. He further referenced Exhibit 1, page 26 as the violation work sheet. In response to direct testimony Mr. Sayegh testified from the CSHO reportings that Exhibit 1, pages 63 and 64 described the lack of locking pins on the scaffold, and misalignment of the scaffold frames. He identified and testified on the witness statements at Exhibit 1 of employees Manuel Rangel (page 20), Alberto Carrillo (page 22) and Jose Garcia (page 24).

The narrative report stipulated in evidence at Exhibit 1, pages 14 through 16, described the observations and findings of CSHO Nester as bases for the citation. The report focused on wind speed/gusts which could cause potential uplift and displacement of scaffolding, and contributing factors for displacement of the scaffolding due to misalignment of the frame, connections, and securing components. The narrative report stipulated in evidence provided as follows:

After conducting the opening conferences, I observed several frames on the fabricated frame scaffold to be missing connector pins which would hold the scaffold frames together. The scaffold was 5 tiers, with the top level at height of approximately 35 feet, and wrapped around all 4 sides of the project. I observed that the frames had holes which would be used to insert connector pins, however the holes were empty as there were no pins or any other equivalent means (see photos).

Employees were observed working on the southeast corner of the project, installing paper and metal mesh (lath) which helps to hold the plaster onto the building. Employees were observed on the top level (5<sup>th</sup> tier) and another employee was observed on the first level of the scaffold. The frames where employees were observed working also did

not have connector pins holding the frames together.

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There was wind gusts present on the day of the inspection, which could potentially lead to uplift on the scaffold (31 mph wind gusts according to Weather Underground).

One employee advised that he worked from the top level of the scaffold (approximately 35 feet high) for about two hours to install paper lathe. The employee added that he doesn't remember the scaffold ever having connector pins.

The Competent Person for the scaffold erection, Mr. Jose Garcia, stated that the scaffold did not have connector pins as he didn't think it needed pins. Mr. Garcia did explain that the connector pins help the scaffold from coming apart in high winds. Mr. Garcia explained that he did a visual inspection of the scaffold the morning of the inspection.

The Vice President, Mr. Sorensen, advised that the scaffold has stacking pins, in which the frames are stacked together, however he also noted that the scaffold did not have connector pins. Mr. Sorensen stated that connector pins are necessary for high winds where uplift can occur. However, Mr. Sorensen stated he considered high winds to be 90-100 mph winds.

I walked the entire scaffold and observed pins sides missing on all of the scaffolding. However, employee exposure was on the southeast side of the project, where employees advised they were working on the day of the inspection. When walking the scaffold on the north side of the I observed planks project, that were overlapping over support frames. I did not observe employee exposure, nor did employees advise that they were working in the area during employee interviews. I addressed the condition of the scaffold deck with the Vice President, Mr. The rest of the scaffold appeared Sorensen. satisfactory.

Additional investigation revealed a significant amount of published information regarding requirements for the use of locking pins on supported (fabricated frame) scaffolding. Generally, both industry practice and published consensus standards require the use of locking pins whenever the potential for uplift and scaffold frame separation is present. The

specific manufacturers of the various scaffold components were unable to be determined during this inspection, as the employer did not maintain a record of the manufacturers and no markings were located on the components themselves. A review of manufacturer instructions and safety requirements was conducted to determine if a general industry practice related to locking pins could be established.

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The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) published ANSI A10.8-2011, an industry consensus standard that contains safety practices for the erection, use and dismantling of supported scaffolding. Within that document, ANSI states "Where uplift may occur, post members shall be locked together vertically by pins or other equivalent means" (ANSI 10.8-2011, paragraph 10.6).

OSHA recognizes the hazard of working from scaffolding without locking pins on its public webpage, www.OSHA.gov, and addresses the issue of uplift in several ways. First, in a published scaffold pamphlet, OSHA states "Paragraph (c) (4) requires the locking together of end frames. This requirement only applies where uplift forces are strong enough to displace the end frames or panels, such as when a hoist is being used that could snag the scaffold during a hoist operation" (https://www.osha.gov/dte/library/scaffolds/ summary.html. Further, OSHA states "Frames and panels must be locked together to prevent uplift, where uplift can occur. Uplift is the separation of a frame from the frame below it" (https://www. osha.gov/SLTC/etools/scaffolding/supported/frame. OSHA also states "Separation of frames can occur in high winds (uplift), or when workers climb endframes, overload the platform, or strike scaffold materials, with tools, (https://www.osha.gov.SLTC/etools/scaffolding/ supported/frame.html).

Metaltech scaffolding publishes publicly a available instruction document regarding the erection fo the frame scaffolding it produces. In that instruction document, Metaltech states uplift could cause the components separate, locking pins must be used and the components secured. Uplift might be caused by the action of wind on a secured deck or by the leverage action of a cantilever side bracket on the scaffolding. All joints must be pinned on rolling scaffoldings and free-standing towers."

Performance Builders, in its own Scaffold Safety Program states: "Bracing frames and panels . . . Where uplift can happen which would displace scaffold end frames or panels, the frames shall be locked together vertically by pins or equivalent means." This quote, taken from materials published as safety instructions by Performance Builders, is taken verbatim from the cited standard, 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4).

Based on information I obtained during the course of this inspection, and review of the employer's own documents, the employer possesses heightened awareness of the requirements of Due to previous OSHA compliance standard. inspections and subsequent citations related to the standard, the employer has been made aware of the requirements of the standard by this agency. Inspection 1179673 was opened on September 21, 2016. Citations issued as a result of that inspection were received by the employer on October 27, 2016. Inspection 1172862 was a fatality investigation opened on August 22, 2016. Citations issued as a result of that inspection were required by the employer on December 12, 2016.

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Mr. Sayegh testified on the required proof element of employer knowledge. He referenced the reported co-owner (Mr. Sorensen) opinion that locking pins were not necessary at this site on the day of inspection. Counsel stipulated to the admitted owners decision not to pin the scaffolding at the site. Mr. Sayegh referenced employee interviews on the company safety policy providing that employees are not permitted to work if there are winds exceeding 20 mph.

Mr. Sayegh referenced Exhibit 1, pages 26 to 29 noted as basis for the citation. He explained the specific reference to winds of approximately 31 mph as contributing to potential uplift. He testified on direct and redirect referencing Exhibit 1, pages 72 and 73 on the ANSI guidance material and read from the CAO guidance letter:

"Uplift can be introduced into manufactured

scaffolding system by many means which include, but are not limited to, the following . . . " (Tr. pg. 67)

He further read from the violation worksheet Exhibit 1, page 28, as to the factors contributing to uplift in addition to the 31 mph wind:

"The employer advised that there were scaffold components from three to four different manufacturers in use on the site at the time of inspection. There were also work trucks arriving around the scaffold and the job site which could potentially contribute to displacement or separation of the scaffolding frame components if the scaffold were to be struck by the equipment."

Mr. Sayegh testified as to the employee exposure proof element; and penalty assessment components involving severity, probability and gravity in support of the classification of willful. He again referenced CSHO Nester's report and explained that

heightened awareness under the requirements of

the cited standard through the previous OSHA compliance inspections and subsequent citations

related to the standard . . . " Exhibit 1, page

employer possesses

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In continued redirect examination, Mr. Sayegh testified the only "pinning" subject of citation involved locking pins.

Mr. Sayegh explained the citation was reclassified from **Serious** to **Willful**, but could not be classified as **repeat** because a prior violation had not been confirmed a **final order**. He explained the previous citations were referenced to support **employer knowledge** and the need for **heightened awareness** due to the prior experience with scaffolding safety enforcement.

Mr. Sayegh testified that no wind testing instruments were utilized by NVOSHA. Similarly he did not know exactly when wind gusts

occurred. He referenced the CSHO summary where Mr. Nester reported the wind speed by use of his cell phone for information published at a nearby area. Exhibit 1, page 29, Mr. Sayegh testified again as to wind speed, noting the CSHO reported information from the National Weather Service at the Henderson Executive Airport showed gusts of 38 mph on February 6, 2017 and 41 mph on February 7, 2017. He testified the confirmed gusts also occurred on February 9, 2017, the date of the inspection.

Mr. Sayegh testified on the difference between uplift and actual displacement. He testified the intent of the standard for enforcement purposes is to cite for lack of locking pins when uplift would occur to effectuate displacement or a separation in the framing material which could result in a partial or complete collapse and injury to employees.

Counsel inquired with regard to the reclassification of the citation from Serious to Willful. Mr. Sayegh explained that supervisor Garrett initially approved the citation for a Serious violation, however "... it appears ... our administrator sent an e-mail ... directing the citation be amended to a Willful classification." When asked for the basis of same, Mr. Sayegh responded he did not know. (Tr. page 43)

Mr. Sayegh testified respondent employees can work on scaffold during high wind, just so all the protections are in place.

Mr. Sayegh testified wind gusts of 31 mph were determined to be a "contributing factor but not the only consideration." He confirmed the Federal OSHA Interpretation Letter referenced at Exhibit 2, page 72 and agreed the 2011 issuance was the same as the original bases that pinning is required only when there is a potential for uplift.

Counsel questioned Mr. Sayegh on the initial determination for issuance of citation. Mr. Sayegh responded "correct" as to the basis for initially finding a violation was only the potential of uplift because of wind gusts. Mr. Sayegh agreed there was no CSHO findings of wind screens being attached to the scaffolding, hoists or cantilevers nor any forklift in the proximity. He further confirmed at the transcript page 41 that the citation does not identify any other potential for uplift than wind gusts of approximately 31 mph.

On continued questioning, Mr. Sayegh testified he had no evidence employees were on the scaffolding when the wind gusts were measured.

Mr. Sayegh testified at Exhibit 1, page 70 that the final OSHA rule for guidance remains as previous to

"require locking together of end frames and is essentially the same as existing § 1926.451(d)(6). This requirement only applies where uplift forces are strong enough to displace the end frames or panels, such as when a joist is being used that could snag the scaffold during hoist operation." (emphasis added)

Counsel identified information at Exhibit 2, page 159, from the OSHA website, which provides:

"Employees are not permitted to work on or from scaffolds during storms or high wind, unless a competent person has determined that it is safe, and those employees are protected by [29 CFR 1926.451(f)(12)]."

At the conclusion of complainant's case, respondent presented witness testimony from company foreman Mr. Jose Manuel Rangel, co-owner Ms. Laura Sorensen, and engineer Mr. Kent Barber.

Mr. Rangel testified through the assistance of an interpreter.

He explained he is a foreman and a 20 year employee in the construction industry with experience in the recognition of scaffolding hazards. He testified that if winds are more than 20 mph

1 the company has provided him with authorization to stop work. Не further testified that on the day of the inspection there were no winds of 20 mph and it was safe to work. He further responded to questioning on his authority that he can stop work if any equipment is operating too close to the scaffolding. Mr. Rangel testified that if material is needed, it is passed by hand up to employees working on the scaffolding in a five gallon bucket, no hoist was utilized. He further testified they never use a forklift to raise material up to the scaffolding.

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On cross-examination Mr. Rangel testified in response to questioning on how he determines the wind speed to be 20 mph. He responded that by experience he is able to determine the wind speed and his reference to the weather channel. He further testified that ". . . when there's wind we do not work . . . " (Tr. pages 79-80) Mr. Rangel testified that locking pins are needed in scaffolding to make it "more safe," he is aware that no locking pins were utilized on the subject scaffold.

Ms. Laura Sorensen testified that it is not company practice to use locking pins unless certain conditions exist and determined by the competent person in charge of the scaffolding. She described the safety training program at the time of hire for testing, training and supervision for review to assure qualifications. In response to the question "Do you have competent persons," Ms. Sorensen testified ". . . Yes, we do. Anybody that's going to work on the scaffolding for the company is trained as a "competent person." (Tr. page 84, lines 15-18) She testified the foreman has absolute authority to stop work if wind conditions make it unsafe to perform employee operations. She testified that it makes much more sense to simply dump the stucco material and stop work entirely if it's windy rather than come down during gusts and resume work later. Ms. Sorensen testified that whenever there's a need to use hoists the employee obtain locking pins. (Tr. pgs.96-97) She further testified they never use forklifts for material; only sometimes hoists. Employees are not allowed to work in winds at or about 20 mph. Ms. Sorensen testified that weather conditions can differ a half mile form the work site, including winds; and that she informed the OSHA inspector at the time of the informal conference that company crews are not allowed to work when winds reach a speed of 20 mph. She also responded that she requested an expert opinion on uplift conditions and that the engineer is here today to testify.

On redirect, Ms. Sorensen testified pins sometimes can be misidentified, however at the time of inspection all pins required for scaffolding were utilized except locking pins because the company and responsible employees saw no potential for uplift. She further testified that OSHA never raised causes for potential uplift or identified anything other than wind. Ms. Sorensen testified that the company now pins all scaffolding even though she does not believe it to be required but simply to satisfy OSHA, given the previous citations.

Mr. Kent Barber identified himself as a professional engineer with 20 years of civil engineering and construction experience. He was retained for analysis and opinion for the subject citation. Mr. Barber testified at respondent's Tab 4, there was no evidence of wind speed provided which "could have caused uplift." There were no findings that 20 mph could cause uplift or displacement. He testified that planking was not required to be secured and can often exacerbate

conditions for uplift. He analyzed the Pinecrest Inspirada Academy subject work site conditions after the citation. He reviewed and analyzed terms of 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4) and noted the citation specifically made reference to the potential for uplift to occur from only wind gusts. He analyzed and made a correlation between the wind speed and potential for uplift to prepare for his testimony and rendered a report and opinion in this case. He reached a conclusion that wind speeds required to separate frames that are not tied down, planks not tied down, would be ". . . approximately 100 mph. . ." (Tr. page 125) He further testified as to wind gusts necessary if planks were secured to the scaffold to need to reach approximately 64 mph to cause any uplift or displacement.

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On cross-examination, Mr. Barber testified that he utilized the OSHA website but did not examine the specific scaffold involved the subject action.

At the conclusion of evidence and testimony, counsel presented closing arguments.

Complainant asserted the exhibits in evidence established the requirement for a "heightened awareness" by the employer which support the willful classification. Counsel argued the employer experience of prior inspections and citations involving scaffold security safety issues demonstrated the requirement for a special increased awareness to meet the criteria for the willful findings. That past experience is evidence of employer knowledge for illegality of the cited conduct; and/or the state of mind to find a conscious disregard and/or plain 26 indifference for the safety and health of employees. She argued that 27 respondent has been in the same position three times which confirms 28 the need for heightened awareness for scaffold work safety.

Counsel asserted that foreman Rangel testified he was trained on scaffolding yet during testimony he thought the pins were for the purposes of "stability." She asserted the engineer testimony should not be relied upon by the Board because Mr. Barber did not have all of the facts involving the subject scaffolding, the work site, or conditions, therefore should be considered for due weight. Counsel asserted ". . . the biggest distinction between classification of serious and a classification of willful falls on the employer knowledge and the level that has to be shown." (Tr. page 131) "Based on the testimony you heard from the experience Performance Builders has on multi-employer work sites, they know the scaffold safety possibilities . . . because it's happened before." (Tr. page 137) She argued that you have employee exposure based upon the employee interviews which reflect ". . . they said they had been working up to five days . . . Some of them had worked up to five hours on that scaffolding per day. So the exposure is there." (Tr. page 137)

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Respondent counsel argued the respondent fully complied with the standard and Federal OSHA Interpretation Letter guidance. Pinning is not required unless certain circumstances exist. For example, very heavy winds, forklifts operating near the scaffolding, or other recognized conditions to warrant pinning of scaffolding. Counsel argued that only wind at 31 mph was cited as a cause for pinning in the citation; but no evidence of any 31 mph wind velocity, or that potential displacement could occur. Counsel asserted ". . .It is clear the scaffolding at Pinecrest was erected by a competent person. It is also clear and undenied that the scaffolding was joined together by stacking pins per the requirements of 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(3). . . It has also been established that the scaffolding was properly tied

1 and braced to the building pursuant to 29 CFR 1926.154(c). There were no tarps attached . . . no screens . . . attached to the scaffolding. It's already been established there were no hoists near the scaffolding and there's no evidence . . . any forklifts in operation near the scaffolding." Counsel further argued ". . . the citation that was issued under 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4) was for the lack of locking pins and the exposure that was cited clearly in both the original citation and amended citation was based upon wind alone. Wind gusts up to 31 miles per hour was all that was cited in both regular - - the original citation and amended citation." (Tr. pages 138-139) Counsel argued the employer company policy, and unrefuted testimony from Ms. Sorensen and foreman Rangel, and admitted by complainant witness Sayegh, was that OSHA does not require locking pins in all circumstances. ". . . It is required only under two conditions . . . where there is uplift, and then only if the uplift is sufficient to displace the end frames, one frame to the other . . . Those are the only circumstances in which they are required." (Tr. page 140) Counsel argued that while it's been asserted in the hearing today, 19 there is no evidence or requirement by OSHA that locking pins are to 20 be used in all situations. Witnesses Sorensen and Rangel both 21 testified they do not use locking pins when it is unnecessary. "Ms. Sorensen testified they do use locking pins when they have hoists or outriggers or cantilevers or other such devices in close proximity or 23 attached to scaffolding . . . then they pin the area where those items |are going to be used because that's where uplift could occur." (Tr. pages 140-141) Counsel argued "So the issue is not any of these what-27 | if situations . . . The issue is . . . Under the conditions found on 28 the day of the inspection by the inspector, was there a possibility

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1 of uplift occurring." Counsel argued ". . . the only evidence cited in the citation twice, in the initial citation and then again when it was amended, was wind gusts of up to 31 miles per hour." (Tr. Page 141) He asserted you heard today the testimony of our expert who did the calculations to address the wind issue. Counsel argued ". . . it's OSHA's burden to prove . . . they must prove by a preponderance of evidence . . . on the day of the inspection . . . uplift forces of wind were sufficient to cause separation, as required by the regulations, to trigger requirement for locking pins." (Tr. page 143, lines 15-23)

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Counsel argued that for a Willful citation ". . . under the case law . . . there has to be substantial evidence that the employer intentionally disregarded or was plainly indifferent to and knowingly permitted a serious hazard to exist. . . Has there been evidence of this?" Counsel asserted there were no measurements of wind speed or any evidence that same existed at any speed at the time of the inspection; nor requirement in the standards for pinning scaffolding even if there was a wind speed of 31 mph, nor any employee working beyond the company policy requirement for working once the wind was determined to be at 20 mph. (Tr. pages 144-145)

Counsel concluded there has been no evidence by OSHA of a violative condition at the work site that would have required pinning; nor anything in the citation to cause uplift other than a reference to wind.

## APPLICABLE LAW

The Board is required to review the evidence and recognized legal elements to prove violations under established occupational safety and health law.

In all proceedings commenced by the filing of a notice of contest, the **burden of proof** rests with the Administrator. (See NAC 618.788(1). (emphasis added)

NAC 618.788 (NRS 618.295) In all proceedings commenced by the filing of a notice of contest, the burden of proof rests with the Chief.

All facts forming the basis of a complaint must be proved by a preponderance of the evidence. See Armor Elevator Co., 1 OSHC 1409, 1973-1974 OSHD  $\P16,958$  (1973).

NRS 233B(2) "Preponderance of evidence" means evidence that enables a trier of fact to determine that the existence of the contested fact is more probable than the nonexistence of the contested fact.

To prove a violation of a standard, the Secretary must establish (1) the applicability of the standard, (2) the existence of noncomplying conditions, (3) employee exposure or access, and (4) that the employer knew or with the exercise of reasonable diligence could have known of the violative condition. See Belger Cartage Service, Inc., 79 OSAHRC 16/B4, 7 BNA OSHC 1233, 1235, 1979 CCH OSHD ¶23,400, p.28,373 (No. 76-1948, 1979); Harvey Workover, Inc., 79 OSAHRC 72/D5, 7 BNA OSHC 1687, 1688-90, 1979 CCH OSHD 23,830, pp. 28,908-10 (No. 76-1408, 1979); American Wrecking Corp. v. Secretary of Labor, 351 F.3d 1254, 1261 (D.C. Cir. 2003). (emphasis added)

A respondent may rebut allegations by showing:

- 1. The standard was inapplicable to the situation at issue;
- The situation was in compliance; or lack of access to a hazard. See, Anning-Johnson Co., 4 OSHC 1193, 1975-1976 OSHD ¶ 20,690 (1976). (emphasis added)

A "willful" violation is established upon a preponderance of evidence based upon NRS 618.635 which provides in pertinent part:

Any employer who willfully or repeatedly violates any requirements of this chapter, any standard, rule, regulation or order promulgated or prescribed pursuant to this chapter, may be assessed an administrative fine of not more than \$70,000 for each violation, but not less than

\$5,000 for each willful violation. (emphasis added)

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A "willful" violation is one "committed with intentional, knowing or voluntary disregard for the requirements of the Act, or the plain indifference to employee safety." A willful violation is distinguished from a nonwillful violation by "an employer's heightened awareness of the illegality of the conduct or conditions and by a state of mind, i.e. conscious disregard or plain indifference for the safety and health of employees." A showing of evil or malicious intent is not necessary to establish willfulness. On the other hand, willfulness will not be found where the employer's noncompliance is the result mere negligence or carelessness. Occupational Safety and Health Administration bears (OSHA) the burden of establishing willfulness and thus must show an employer was aware of the illegality of its acts or omissions and consciously disregarded the requirements of the Act or was plainly indifferent to employee safety and health. E.g., National Eng'g & Contracting Co. v. Herman, 181 F.3d 715, 18 OSH Cases 2114 (6th Cir. 1999); Caterpillar Inc. V. Herman, 122 F.3d 437, 17 OSH Cases 2121 (7th Cir. 1997); Valdak Corp. v. OSHRC, 73 F.3d 1466, 17 OSH Cases 1492 (8th Cir 1996); Interstate Erectors Inc. V. OSHRC, 74 F.3d 223, 17 OSH Cases 1522 (10th Cir. 1996); Conie Const v. Reich, 73 F.3d 382, 17 OSH Cases 1409 (D.C. Cir. 1995); Reich v. Trinity Indus., 16 F.3d 1149, 16 OSH Cases 1670 (11th cir. 1994); Universal Auto Radiator Mfg. Co. v. Marshall, 631 F.2d 20, 8 OSH Cases 2026 (3d Cir. 1980); Pepperidge Farm Inc., 17 OSH Cases 1998-2000 (Rev. Comm'n 1997); General Motors Corp., 14 OSH Cases 2064 (Rev. Comm'n 1991); McKie Ford, Inc. v. Secretary of Labor, 191 F.3d 853, 18 OSH Cases 1906 (8th Cir. 1999); McLaughlin v. Union Oil, 869 F.2d 1039, 1047, 13 OSH Cases 2033 (7th Cir. 1989) (an employer's negligent failure to discover a crack in pressure vessel was not willful); Brock v. Morello Bros. Constr., 809 F.2d 161, 13 OSH Cases 1033 (1st Cir. 1987), aff'g 12 OSH Cases 1779 (Rev. Comm'n 1986). (emphasis added)

A "competent person" is defined as "one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them" [29 CFR 1926.32(f)].

The burden of proof to confirm a violation rests with OSHA under Nevada law (NAC 618.788(1)); but after establishing same, the burden shifts to the respondent to prove any recognized defenses. See Jensen Construction Co., 7 OSHC 1477, 1979 OSHD ¶ 23,664 (1979). Accord, Marson Corp., 10 OHSHC 2128, 1980 OSHC 1045 ¶ 24,174 (1980).

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As a general rule, every employer on a multiemployer work site has the responsibility to protect its own employees from unsafe conditions, regardless of who created or controlled the To escape OSHA liability, an employer hazard. that neither created nor controlled the hazardous condition must show that either it alternative measure to protect its employees or did not know and could not reasonably have known that the condition was hazardous. Recognizing that requiring a non-creating, non-controlling employer to take "realistic alternative measures" to protect its employees is a rather broad command, OSHRC has addressed the requirement on a number of occasions. OSHRC has stated that "our [Anning-Johnson/Grossman Steel] decisions respondent's ability to use realistic measures to comply fully with the standard a material issue of fact. A Practical Guide to OSHA § 8.01[3] (2002). (emphasis added)

At Citation 1, Item 1, referencing 29 CFR 1926.452(c)(4), the Board finds the proof elements required to support a violation were met by the preponderant evidence.

The work site was comprised of more than one employer and satisfied the legally recognized criteria for classification as a multi-employer work site. See A Practical Guide to OSHA § 8.01[3] (2002), supra. At a multi-employer work site, employer safety awareness is heightened for not only its own employees but also the employees of other contractors on the site. At the subject multi-employer work site, employee exposure to the potential hazardous conditions due to work trucks operating in the area was observed and noted by the CSHO as Exhibit 1, page 28. The exhibit in evidence

referenced:

"There were also work trucks driving around the scaffold on the job site which could potentially contribute to displacement or separation of the scaffold frame components if the scaffold was struck by the equipment."

At subject multi-employer work site, respondent employees were exposed to fall hazards from equipment operated by other employer(s) potentially striking the respondent scaffolding to cause uplift and displacement. The respondent employees were exposed to potential fall hazards given the lack of control by the respondent employer over employees of other employers operating equipment on the site. While the CSHO focus for the citation as referenced in the charges was on wind conditions to create uplift and displacement of the scaffolding, the evidence of other contributing factors, particularly work trucks operating around the scaffolding on this multi-employer work site, provided the employer with sufficient knowledge to exercise additional safety measures, including the pinning of scaffolding. The pinning protection measure was feasible both practically and economically. There was no evidence to the contrary.

While the typical recognized conditions which all parties agreed could mandate a required "pinning" were not existent, e.g. high velocity winds, use of hoists, forklift delivery of materials to the scaffold, tarping, and/or cantilevers in use, there was sufficient preponderant evidence in the record of truck traffic on the site as a contributing factor. Notably, at Exhibit 1, page 62 the photograph depicted a ladder tied to the scaffolding which allows reasonable inference that if and when utilized it could create greater stress on the scaffolding without locking pins to cause uplift and displacement. (Tr. page 15)

The respondent here knew, directly, or with the exercise of reasonable diligence required to know, and/or constructively from supervisor imputation, that at the subject multi-employer work site, other employers/employee operations were occurring. The employer was subject of previous inspections and citations for the lack of pinning scaffolding when uplift could allegedly occur and result displacement. A reasonably prudent employer is expected to implement additional efforts, including use of pins in scaffolding, when various hazardous conditions are existent, particularly on a multi-employer work site where there are reduced control capabilities to assure employee safety protection. Compliance with the general mandate of the standard requires reasonable efforts where sufficient conditions Direct evidence and reasonable inference drawn from the warrant. record reflect this employer at this multi-employer work site should have implemented additional safety measures and taken the feasible steps to pin the scaffolding for assured protection of the employees.

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The classification of a violation as willful is of significant importance to employers in the state of Nevada; and certainly this Board acting as an independent appellate hearing tribunal. It is appropriate to reference applicable treatises and case law guidance to support finding a willful violation against any employer.

The Commission considers the number of prior violations in relation to the total volume of work to determine the employer's state of mind. A.E. Staley, 19 OSH Cases 1199, 1212-13 (Rev. Comm'n 2000), aff'd, 295 F.3d 1341, 19 OSH Cases 1937 (D.C. Cir. 2002) (emphasis added)

An employer who knows of the requirements of the Act and deliberately disregards them has committed a willful violation. The Commission continues to consider prior citations issued to an employer as evidence that the employer knew of the requirements of the standard. An employer's

knowledge fo an applicable legal requirement also demonstrated through an employer's communication OSHA personnel, with or supervisor's admission of familiarity with the Intentional noncompliance with a standards. standard will usually be characterized as willful even if that noncompliance is based on the employer's belief that compliance was unnecessary employee safety or that the methods implemented by the employer were superior to those called for by OSHA's standard. Revoli Constr. Co., 19 OSH Cases at 1685 (employer had heightened awareness of requirements based on four prior citations in four years); Capeway Roofing Sys., Inc., 20 OSH Cases 1331, 1341 (Rev. Comm'n 2003), aff'd, 391 F.3d 56, 20 OSH Cases (1<sup>st</sup> Cir. 2004) (long history of fall violations established heightened protection awareness of requirements). Interstate Erectors, Inc., 74 F.3d 223, 229, 17 OSH Cases 1522 (10th Cir. 1996); Pentecost Contracting Corp., 17 OSH Cases 1953, 1955 (Rev. Comm'n 1997); Conie Constr. Inc., 73 F.3d 382, 384 17 OSH Cases 1409 (D.C. Cir. 1995). But See, Johnson Controls, Inc., 16 OSH Cases 1048, 1051 (Rev. Comm'n 1993) (familiarity with standard alone may not prove employer's actual awareness of illegality). 73 F.3d 382; Donovan v. Capital City Conie, Excavating Co., 712 F.2d 1008, 1010, 11 OSH Cases 1581 (6th Cir. 1983) (Foreman's belief that trench was safe); F.X. Messina Constr. Corp. v. OSHRC, 505 F.2d 701, 2 OSH Cases 1325 ( $1^{\rm st}$  Cir 1974) (same); Fluor Daniel v. OSHRC, 295 F.3d 1232, 1241, 19 OSH Cases 1945, 1951 (11th Cir. 2002). (emphasis added)

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Intentional disregard for the requirements of a standard and plain indifference to employee safety are independent elements of willfulness. Thus, even if an employer did not actually know of the specific requirements of a standard or the Act, willfulness can be found if the employer's conduct or attitude exhibits plain indifference to employee safety. In A.E. Staley v. Secretary of Labor, 295 F.3d 1341, 19 OSH Cases 1937 (D.C. Cir. 2002) the District of Columbia Circuit the difference clarified between the independent elements of willfulness: intentional disregard of the requirements of the regulation and plain indifference to employee safety. Because willfulness requires a state of mind characterized by intentional disregard for the requirements of the Act or plain indifference to employee safety, a violation is not willful if the employer had a good faith belief that as a

factual matter it was in compliance with requirements of the standard. An employer may also be able to negate willfulness by showing that it had a good faith belief about the proper interpretation of a standard. The test of good faith is an objective one, and the employer's belief must be reasonable under An circumstances. employer's belief that compliance is infeasible or that the standard does not apply, thus must be objectively reasonable to sustain a defense of willfulness. Beta Constr. Co., 16 OSH Cases 1435, n.7 (Rev. Comm'n 1993); Valdak Corp. v. OSHRC, 73 F.3d 1466, 17 OSH Cases 1492 (8th Cir. 1996); National Eng'g & Contracting Co., 18 OSH Cases 1075, 1080-81 (Rev. Comm'n 1997), aff'd, 181 F.3d 715, 721-22 (6th Cir. 1999); CBI Servs., Inc., 19 OSH Cases 1591, 1607 (Rev. Comm'n 2001); Trinity Indus. Inc., 20 OSH Cases 1051, 1067 (Rev. Comm'n), (5<sup>th</sup> aff'd, 387 107 F. App'x Cir. 2004) (unpublished decision). Donovon v. Mica Constr. Co., 699 F.2d 341, 11 OSH Cases 1161 (8th Cir. 1983) (Rev. Comm'n 1993); Morrison-Knudsen Co./ Yonkers Contracting Co., Joint Venture, 16 OSH Cases 1105, 1124 (Rev. Comm'n 1993); Compare Interstate Erectors, Inc. v. OSHRC, 74 F.3d 223, 17 OSH Cases 1522 (10th Cir. 1996) (employer's reliance on its own interpretation reasonable), and Carabetta Enters., 15 OSH Cases 1429, 1432-33 (Rev. Comm'n 1991) (same), with General Motors Corp., 14 OSH Cases 2064, 2068 (Rev. Comm'n 1991) (reasonable disagreement with OSHA over interpretation of records access provision); A.E. Staley Mfg. Co. v. Secretary of Labor, 295 F.3d 1341, 1348, 19 OSH Cases 1937 (D.D. Cir. 2002) (no good faith effort to comply where the company's safety committee met only half the time and lacked the authority to correct hazards); J.A.M. Builders, Inc. v. Herman, 223 F.3d 1350, 1355-56, 19 OSH Cases 1241, 1244 (11th Cir. 2000) (violation willful where employer recognized the hazard to its workers energized electrical lines, but did "essentially nothing" to eliminate the risk to employees); Froedtert Mem'l Lutheran Hosp., Inc. 20 OSH Cases 1500, 1510-11 (Rev. Comm'n 2004) (employees good faith belief that the temporary workers were not its employees was sufficiently plausible to obviate willfulness); Spirit Homes, Inc., 20 OSH Comm'n 1629 (Rev. 2004) (employer's reasonable good faith efforts to eliminate the hazard negated willfulness); Rawson Contractors Inc., 20 OSH Cases 1078, 1082 (Rev. Comm'n 2003) (no good effort where employer fails to enforce safety rules); Northern Landing Line Constr. Co.,

19 OSH Cases 1465, 1476 (Rev. Comm'n 2001) (no good faith effort to comply where employer failed to train employees and had an inadequate safety program); Morrison-Knudsen, 16 OSH Cses at 1124; A.J. McNulty & Co. v. Secretary of Labor, 283 F.3d 328, 338, 19 OSH Cases 1769, 1776 (D.C. Cir. 2002) (no good faith evaluation of facts regarding infeasibility defense); Capeway Roofing Sys., Inc., 20 OSH Cases 1331, 1341-42 (Rev. Comm'n 2003) (employer's belief that the standard did not apply was not objectively reasonable where contradicted by clear OSHA guidelines). (emphasis added)

The Board in hearing the witness testimony and considering the documentation in evidence, as well as the previous citation occurrences, determines the subject employer had a sufficient "heightened awareness" to warrant the willful classification. The previous citation knowledge, and violative conduct occurring on a multi-employer work site renders the factual evidence sufficient for the Board confirm the willful violation.

The proof elements under the statutory burden, i.e.:

applicability of the standard, potential hazard exposure to employees

who had been working on the scaffolding, employer knowledge, and the

existence of noncomplying conditions were satisfied by the

preponderant evidence.

Employers of employees on multi-employee work sites must exercise additional reasonable precautionary measures due to the heightened awareness expected from any prudent employer for employee safety. Given the lack of specific parameters in the codified standard itself, the particular factual conditions at each work site subject of a citation are critical to reach a fair determination of whether violative conditions exist to require scaffold pinning.

The Board concludes that Citation 1, Item 2 based upon the preponderant evidence as a matter of fact and law, the cited violation

occurred, and properly classified as Willful. The proposed penalty in the amount of \$44,000.00 is approved.

It is the decision of the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD that a violation of Nevada Revised Statutes did occur as to Citation 1, Item 2, 29 CFR 1926.452(d)(4), the violation properly classified as Willful, and the proposed penalty in the amount of Forty-Four Thousand Dollars (\$44,000.00) confirmed.

The Board directs counsel for the Complainant, Administrative Officer of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, to submit proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law to the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD and serve copies on opposing counsel within twenty (20) days from date of After five (5) days time for filing any objection, the decision. final Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law shall be submitted to the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD by prevailing counsel. Service of the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law signed by the Chairman of the NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD shall constitute the Final Order of the BOARD.

DATED:	This .	JTh	day of	July	2018.	^		
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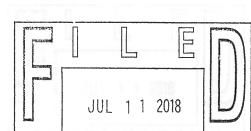
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, DIVISION OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY,

Complainant,

VS.

PERFORMANCE BUILDERS,

Respondent.



Docket No. LV 17-1907

OSH REVIEW BOARD

# NOTICE OF ERRATA

ON THE 5<sup>th</sup> day of July 2018 the **NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD (BOARD)** entered a Decision in the subject captioned matter. The Decision contained a typographical error on page 26, line 27, which incorrectly identified the citation as Item "2". The citation should have been Item "1". Additionally, at page 27, line 5 the citation was incorrectly identified as Item "2", it should be Item "1" and 29 CFR 1926.452 (d) (4) should read 29 CFR 1926.452 (c) (4).

The Decision is amended and corrected through this Errata.

In all other respects the Decision entered by the BOARD is confirmed.

DATED this \_llth day of July 2018.

NEVADA OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW BOARD

JUL 12 2018

CARSON CITY OFFICE

By: /s/
STEVE INGERSOLL, CHAIRMAN