



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members

Understanding Wind Speed Limitations Safety Message

The question about what's permitted for operating aerial devices and digger derricks in high winds is one that comes up frequently with users. Utility crews often must deal with working in wind. Trouble trucks responding during storm recovery, transmission operations to place visibility balls on lines and working above rooflines in urban locations are just a few examples. Plus, some areas of the country experience high winds regularly or seasonally.

While OSHA restricts use of material-handling aerial devices and digger derricks in winds greater than 30 mph, the reality is that both OSHA – in its General Duty Clause – and manufacturers require that operations cease in wind speeds that may be less than 30 mph if the work conditions are not safe. In addition, utilities frequently have their own policies regarding operation in adverse conditions.

The user must not assume that they can work in winds under 30 mph. The allowable wind speed that permits safe operation can change for each situation, location and work height. The people at the site are the only ones who can determine if it is safe to operate and perform the tasks assigned.

