



## Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



### Grounding Trucks and Mobile Equipment Safety Message

Rule 1910.269(p)(4)(iii)(C) requires that every employee be protected from hazards that might arise from equipment contact with energized lines. In addition, (p)(4)(iii)(C)(3) requires grounding mats and (p)(4)(iii)(C)(4) requires barricades. Rules (C)(3) and (C)(4) are the two rules most often unobserved, yet they are quite possibly the most important when it comes to risk and protection of employees.

The reality is that the purpose of grounding is to cause immediate operation of a circuit protective device, not to protect workers from electrical contact. A worker in contact with grounded equipment energized by contact with an energized line or carrying current as a result of induction will be at risk from lethal touch or step potential unless the worker is at equal potential with the energized equipment and isolated from current flow. That is the reason OSHA mandates equipotential mats.

The OSHA rule does not require that equipment be grounded, but it does have conditional criteria that may require grounding of equipment. A careful reading of 1910.269(p)(4)(iii) provides criteria for operating equipment near energized lines. If the equipment could become energized, there are mandatory requirements beginning with insulation or isolation. If those methods do not provide protection for every exposed employee, rule (p)(4)(iii)(C) mandates that equipment must be grounded, bonded together, equipotentially matted and barricaded.