
29 C.F.R. § 1926.803

Compressed air.

(a) *General provisions.* (1) There shall be present, at all times, at least one competent person designated by and representing the employer, who shall be familiar with this subpart in all respects, and responsible for full compliance with these and other applicable subparts.

(2) Every employee shall be instructed in the rules and regulations which concern his safety or the safety of others.

(b) *Medical attendance, examination, and regulations.* (1) There shall be retained one or more licensed physicians familiar with and experienced in the physical requirements and the medical aspects of compressed air work and the treatment of decompression illness. He shall be available at all times while work is in progress in order to provide medical supervision of employees employed in compressed air work. He shall himself be physically qualified and be willing to enter a pressurized environment.

(2) No employee shall be permitted to enter a compressed air environment until he has been examined by the physician and reported by him to be physically qualified to engage in such work.

(3) In the event an employee is absent from work for 10 days, or is absent due to sickness or injury, he shall not resume work until he is reexamined by the physician, and his physical condition reported, as provided in this paragraph, to be such as to permit him to work in compressed air.

(4) After an employee has been employed continuously in compressed air for a period designated by the physician, but not to exceed 1 year, he shall be reexamined by the physician to determine if he is still physically qualified to engage in compressed air work.

(5) Such physician shall at all times keep a complete and full record of examinations made by him. The physician shall also keep an accurate record of any decompression illness or other illness or injury incapacitating any employee for work, and of all loss of life that occurs in the operation of a tunnel, caisson, or other compartment in which compressed air is used.

(6) Records shall be available for the inspection of the Secretary or his representatives, and a copy thereof shall be forwarded to OSHA within 48 hours following the occurrence of the accident, death, injury, or decompression illness. It shall state as fully as possible the cause of said death or decompression illness, and the place where the injured or sick employee was taken, and such other relative information as may be required by the Secretary.

(7) A fully equipped first aid station shall be provided at each tunnel project regardless of the number of persons employed. An ambulance or transportation suitable for a litter case shall be at each project.

(8) Where tunnels are being excavated from portals more than 5 road miles apart, a first aid station and transportation facilities shall be provided at each portal.

(9) A medical lock shall be established and maintained in immediate working order whenever air pressure in the working chamber is increased above the normal atmosphere.

(10) The medical lock shall:

(i) Have at least 6 feet of clear headroom at the center, and be subdivided into not less than two compartments;

(ii) Be readily accessible to employees working under compressed air;

(iii) Be kept ready for immediate use for at least 5 hours subsequent to the emergence of any employee from the working chamber;

(iv) Be properly heated, lighted and ventilated;

(v) Be maintained in a sanitary condition;

(vi) Have a nonshatterable port through which the occupant(s) may be kept under constant observation;

(vii) Be designed for a working pressure of 75 p.s.i.g.

(viii) Be equipped with internal controls which may be overridden by external controls;

(ix) Be provided with air pressure gauges to show the air pressure within each compartment to observers inside and outside the medical lock.

(x) Be equipped with a manual type sprinkler system that can be activated inside the lock or by the outside lock tender.

(xi) Be provided with oxygen lines and fittings leading into external tanks. The lines shall be fitted with check valves to prevent reverse flow. The oxygen system inside the chamber shall be of a closed circuit design and be so designed as to automatically shut off the oxygen supply whenever the fire system is activated.

(xii) Be in constant charge of an attendant under the direct control of the retained physician. The attendant shall be trained in the use of the lock and suitably instructed regarding steps to be taken in the treatment of employee exhibiting symptoms compatible with a diagnosis of decompression illness;

(xiii) Be adjacent to an adequate emergency medical facility;

(xiv) The medical facility shall be equipped with demand-type oxygen inhalation equipment approved by the U.S. Bureau of Mines;

(xv) Be capable of being maintained at a temperature, in use, not to exceed 90 °F. nor be less than 70 °F.; and

(xvi) Be provided with sources of air, free of oil and carbon monoxide, for normal and emergency use, which are capable of raising the air pressure in the lock from 0 to 75 p.s.i.g. in 5 minutes.

(11) Identification badges shall be furnished to all employees, indicating that the wearer is a compressed air worker. A permanent record shall be kept of all identification badges issued. The badge shall give the employee's name, address of the medical lock, the telephone number of the licensed physician for the compressed air project, and contain instructions that in case of emergency of unknown or doubtful cause or illness, the wearer shall be rushed to the medical lock. The badge shall be worn at all times—off the job, as well as on the job.

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