

MIOSHA Fact Sheet



Part 28, Personnel Hoisting in Steel Erection

For more than 20 years, MIOSHA has had rules that allow ironworkers performing initial steel erection to ride the headache ball under certain situations. In 2007, Construction Standard [Part 28, Personnel Hoisting in Steel Erection](#) (Part 28) was promulgated as a “stand alone” standard that included additional provisions which made riding the headache ball more protective. Michigan has had no reports of any accidents or injuries from riding the headache ball since Part 28 became effective.

Rule 408.42809(2) states: “Riding the headache ball is prohibited except when the work area is inaccessible or hazardous to reach by other means, a maximum of 2 connectors may ride the headache ball to and from the workstation with the knowledge and consent of the employer or the employer’s designated representative. The connector or connectors may be lifted to the workstation only when all of the following conditions exist...” (See sub rules a – m).

The intent is to allow this option only under unique and limited circumstances when it is determined by the affected parties that the work area is inaccessible or hazardous to reach by other means.

Rule 408.42809(2)(b) states: “The connector or connectors and his or her immediate supervisor (who shall be a competent person) and the operator (who will perform the lift) shall verbally agree and certify in writing that using the load line standing platform is the safest alternative. They shall plan the lift together.”

Prior to riding the headache ball, the following shall be done:

- Evaluate all factors to determine if it is the safest means of access to the work area.
- Unanimously agree that riding the headache ball is the safest means of access to the work area.
- Document these factors in the site-specific, written plan.

The requirements for a standing platform as prescribed in Rule 408.42802(2)(c) provide a more stable, slip-resistant means for safe footing when riding the headache ball. The shackle alternative should only be used as a last resort or in emergency situations.

MIOSHA has developed a Division Instruction CSHD-STD-14-1, [Headache Ball Compliance](#), as amended, as an aid in the enforcement of this standard. The instruction includes a site-specific erection plan for riding the headache ball in Appendix A.

If you need additional assistance, all employers are encouraged to contact the MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division at 517-284-7680 if they have questions regarding jobsite health and safety or compliance issues. The MIOSHA Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division provides training and onsite audit services for residential and commercial builders at the employer’s request, free of charge. The CET Division can be contacted directly at 517-284-7720 or by visiting the MIOSHA website at www.michigan.gov/miosha.

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