

South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
Division of Labor
Office of Occupational Safety and Health
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

OSH Program Directive Number 78-1910.169-1

Subject: Article VI, Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) and (b) (2) – Drains on Air Receivers.

Standard: Article VI, Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) and (b) (2), Rules and Regulations, Commissioner of Labor, State of South Carolina.

Cross Reference to Federal Standards: 29 CFR 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) and (b) (2).

Background:

- a. An inquiry has been received regarding federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) enforcement of 29 CFR 1910.169 (b) (2) which requires a bottom drain at the lowest point of every air receiver.
It states:
“A drain pipe or valve shall be installed at the lowest point of every air receiver to provide for the removal of accumulated oil and water.”
- b. This inquiry notes the problem of an apparent inconsistency with Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) which requires either a bottom drain or, alternatively, a side drain; that is, a pipe extending inward from any location to within ¼ inch of the lowest point, in accordance with the 1968 edition of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section VIII. Specifically, Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) requires that:
“All new receivers installed after the effective date of these regulations shall be constructed in accordance with the 1968 edition of the A. S. M. E. Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section VIII.”
- c. This problem arises only with regard to air receivers covered by paragraph U-1 Scope, ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section VIII, 1968, which excludes vessels having an internal or external operating pressure not exceeding 15 psi and vessels having an inside diameter not exceeding 6 inches, and Section 1910.169 (a) (1), which specifies the applicability of the standard.

- d. This problem also arises only with regard to air receivers subject to corrosion since, apparently Section 1910.169 (b) (2) originally was intended to apply only to an air receiver subject to corrosion. See Rule 7.3 of the source standard for Section 1910.169 (b) (2), ANSI B-19, 1938, Safety Code for Compressed Air Machinery. Note that the 1968 edition of the ASME Boiler and Pressure Vessel Code, Section VIII, paragraph UG-25 (e) limits the drain construction requirements to pressure vessels subject to corrosion.

Interpretation:

- a. It is apparent that, despite the limited requirements of Section 1910.169 (b) (2) regarding a “lowest point” drain, Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i) provides for an alternative to this, namely, a side drain. Thus, where side drains are present on air receivers, citations for violations of the (b) (2) requirement are not appropriate, even if the air receiver was constructed prior to April 18, 1971, since this is allowed for in Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (i). (Note, however, the (b) (2) may be appropriately cited where there are violations of the other requirement, stating: “The drain valve on the air receiver shall be opened and the receiver completely drained frequently and at such intervals as to prevent the accumulation of excessive amounts of liquid in the receiver.”)
- b. A citation for violation of Section 1910.169 (a) (2) (I) is appropriate where the air receiver has no bottom or side drain and is subject to corrosion and is covered by paragraph U-1 Scope and Section 1910.169 (a) (1) Application.

Effective Date: This instruction is effective upon receipt and will remain in effect until cancelled or superseded by amendment to the Rules and Regulations.

William M. Lybrand, Director
March 3, 1978