

WAC 296-32-195 Foreword. The purpose of this chapter is to ensure the workplace for telecommunications employees is free from recognized safety and health hazards. The rules contained herein require that worker safety receive a higher degree of priority than production, speed and profit. Worker safety is paramount and employers must ensure that employees are trained and are authorized and/or competent in the provision(s) of this chapter. Employees are expected to follow the provisions of this chapter in accordance with their experience and training. This chapter is not intended to be a complete job description of telecommunications personnel nor is it expected that this chapter will cover every potential hazard that an employer or their employees may encounter. When a hazard exists beyond what is conveyed in this chapter employers and employees are expected, in good faith, to mutually discuss the hazards and agree as to how to perform the work in the safest manner.

To achieve the greatest degree of safety it is critical to understand that the telecommunications industry is ever changing and therefore has many different disciplines and training requirements. There will be definitions that apply to the chapter as a whole and each specific application. It is important to remember that it is the employers' responsibility to ensure that their employees have the competency and necessary training for the work being performed and understand how sections of this chapter apply and afford the greatest possible protection for their employees.

The department of labor and industries (LNI) is the sole administrative agency responsible for the administration and interpretation of this chapter in accordance with the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act of 1973. If there are questions concerning meaning or interpretation about any provision contained within this chapter, please direct them to the department and its authorized representatives.

Evidence has shown that the majority of injuries and deaths in the workplace are preventable. Evidence also indicates that the majority of injuries and deaths are due to the failure of the employer and/or employee to comply with and utilize safe work practices. Information contained in this chapter was a collaborative effort and derived from existing telecommunication industry standards, experience in the field and training. Telecommunication safety requires engineering design, environmental, operational and administrative controls, training policies, personal protective equipment (PPE) and appropriate employee behavior while adhering to safety rules and industry standards. With these components in place and adhered to, work must be appropriately scheduled, properly planned and safely performed.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 17-20-069, § 296-32-195, filed 10/2/17, effective 1/1/18.]