

Minnesota OSHA Clarifies Guidelines For Roll-Over Protective Structures (ROPS)

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It has come to my attention that there is some confusion regarding the use of roll-over protective structures (ROPS) on non-agricultural equipment.

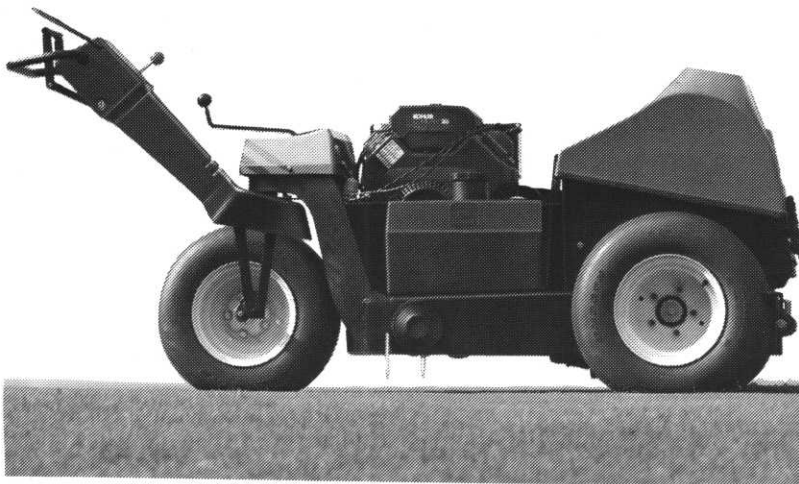
Minnesota OSHA published a draft standard in the State Register on March 25, 1996, along with a request for input from interested parties. In my "Open Letter to All Interested Parties," dated March 29, 1996, I explained that while Minnesota OSHA is considering promulgation of this proposed standard, we would not enforce the use of ROPS in programmed inspections. In the end, after MNOSHA reviewed the comments and concerns of those who responded to the notice, we decided it was not necessary to pursue a standard at this time.

Our current enforcement policy for ROPS for non-agricultural equipment is to address it only in the event

of an accident investigation, and if applicable, utilize the General Duty Clause of the MNOSHA Act to address this recognized hazard.

We recommend that employers establish voluntary guidelines for safe work conditions under which employees may use riding mowers without ROPS. These guidelines should address hazards such as the maximum slope that can be cut safely, wet grass conditions and uneven terrain. This would allow employers to administratively address the hazard of a potential rollover. As a consequence, if such guidelines are incorporated into their Safety and Health Program and enforced, then MNOSHA would not issue citations for lack of ROPS because the employer took positive action to eliminate the hazard.

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