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● **Standard Number:** 1926.500

**DATE:** April 23, 1973

**REPLY TO**

**ATTN OF:** OSHA - ARA's Federal/State Operations - Technical Support

**SUBJECT:** 1926.500, Guardrails, handrails & guards

**TO:** ALL AREA DIRECTORS Paragraph 1926.500(f)(1)(vi) provides for the utilization of types, sizes and arrangements of railing construction provided they meet the conditions established in sub-paragraph a thru d.

In construction the use of cables or chains to guard door and wall openings is common practice; however, unless these chains or cables are of sufficient size and strength to support the loads which might be imposed, they imply a security which is not present.

Since cables or chains are commonly used as barriers or guards on construction projects at floor and wall openings and to establish uniformity in this Region, the following criteria will govern the use of cable and chain as guards.

1. Cable shall be not less than 3/8 inch mild plow steel.
2. Chain shall be not less than 1/4 inch alloy steel.
3. The chain or cable shall be anchored at intervals not to exceed 100 feet. These anchors shall be of sufficient strength to support the imposed loads without deflection.
4. The chain or cable shall be provided with positive tensioning device (such as a turnbuckle) which will reduce the sag in the chain or cable to not more than 2 inches in a 20 foot span.
5. Intermediate supports shall be installed in such a manner that they will provide the strength and spacing outlined for Posts in 1926.500(f)(1)(i), (ii) & (iii).
6. The tensioning device shall have a breaking strength of not less than 10,000 pounds.
7. The chain or cable shall be equipped with flagging or some other means of increasing their visibility.

Chain or cable may be used as immediate rails when installed to the above criteria.

8. Toeboards shall be 4 inches minimum in vertical height and of any material which will provide the strength equivalent to a Standard Southern Pine 1 inch by 1 inch board. These toeboards shall be secured in place as required by the Standards.

R. A. WENDELL  
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for Federal/State Programs.

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