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BEST AVAILABLE PRACTICE WHEN IS TECHNOLOGY “USEFUL” AND THEREFORE “APPLICABLE”?

Applicable. (adj.) Capable of being applied; relevant. Relating to or bearing upon the matter at hand (syn., relevant, germane, pertinent, material, fitting, appropriate). Able to be adapted to an end or use by nature (basic quality) or art.

Capable -- (adj.) able to do something; having intelligence, ability, skill, or experience

Relevant -- (n.) bearing a relation to the matter at hand

Germane -- (adj.) closely or significantly related

Material -- (n.) useful in effecting (producing) an end

Apply. (verb) Put to practical use; have reference or connection (to), especially a logical connection (syn. bear upon, pertain, relate). (Merriam-Webster)

Application. (n.) the act of applying or putting to use. The quality of being usable for a particular purpose or in a special way.

References: The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, 1988; Merriam-Webster, Language Master LM4000, 1989.

Given the ordinary meanings of the words “apply” and “applicable,” ordinary logic and simple reason must acknowledge that the *technical content* of various work method and equipment design standards that address specific stated safety issues, are commonly “capable” of being “applied” to *an entire class* of similar issues. The formal terminology for this practice might be called *creative adaptation* or *technology transfer*.

Applying available information and materials to solve everyday problems is a universal practice among thinking people. Such *creative adaptation* is not extra-ordinary or unusual – to the contrary, it is what people commonly do when they use a screwdriver for a pry bar, a wrench for a tack hammer, a safety pin to remove a splinter, an unfolded paperclip to clean out a crevice, the corner of a wall to scratch one’s back, the palm of one’s hand to write down a number when no paper is available, a packet of sugar to level a wobbly table in a restaurant, and as all will testify, the possible uses of duct tape are endless.

In the same way, regardless of the standing of [agricultural \(29 CFR 1928\) OSHA](#) standards in relation to certain [agricultural](#) operations, (that is, regardless of whether or not they are mandatory), and regardless of their specific content, similar to any other widely published recommended safety practice, such standards certainly stand as *authoritative guidelines* to be followed by prudent [agricultural](#) workplace managers in a wide variety of substantially similar circumstances in the exercise of ordinary care for those who may be exposed to workplace hazards over which such managers have the effective ability to control.

That is, prudent [agricultural](#) workplace managers cannot realistically argue that (a) the content of such long standing federal regulations are not reasonably known to them, nor that (b) the specific title, stated purpose, or specific content of such regulations necessarily limits the logical and practical application of such content to substantially identical potential dangers that may exist in their workplace.

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