

Danger at fire station

To the editor:

May we congratulate Fire Chief Chinn for running a tight ship concerning the National Fire Protection Codes and its compliance with the Aptos community. We wish to offer our sincere thanks for offering the citizens of the Aptos community the security in knowing our fire department employees are in top physical condition. We observe them jogging each day around the fire station.

Yes—He does maintain a watchful eye to be sure the fire codes are closely adhered to. Maybe at times he gets a little overzealous. In his zest to do a good job in policing the fire district, he overlooks one important issue. That is that other regulatory bodies are watching him.

Has Mr. Chinn heard of Cal-Osha? This regulatory body of the Division of Industrial Safety provides certain codes governing safety measures to protect employees against injury. Mr. Chinn must under the law provide his employees with a safe place to work. He must provide them safe tools to work with. Refer to the State of California, Department of Industrial Relations General Industry Safety Orders—Page 432.159 — Article 45 — Belt and pulley drives— Paragraph 4070 — Guarding (a) Any part of a belt and pulley drive, involving the use of flat, crowned or flanged pulleys, which is 7 feet or less from the floor or working level shall be guarded.

Tuesday morning when persons voted at the fire station, they noticed inside the entrance to the voting area to the left, an old-fashioned round stone grinding wheel equipped with an electric motor for power to drive the wheel. The device was equipped with two flanged pulleys, a badly frayed belt. There is no guard covering the pulleys and drive belt assembly.

There are times that it may be very difficult to live by the letter of the law. Even though Mr. Chinn is doing a meritorious job in administering the fire codes, he at times may create undue hardship for persons and businesses in the district.

He has an obligation to provide a safe place to work for his employees. He is not providing safe equipment under the Cal-Osha regulations when he allows employees to use unguarded machinery. Had a Cal-Osha Compliance person discovered this infraction of this DIS regulation he could have been cited.

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