



2006 Most Frequently Cited OSHA Standards

The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) released its "Top 10" list of most frequently cited standards in fiscal year 2006 (October 2005 through September 2006). This list is noteworthy because it represents the areas where OSHA inspectors will be focusing particular attention in the coming year.

According to OSHA, its inspection strategy is to send inspection officers to the places where they think they are needed based on a company's injury rates, illness rates and fatalities. You can guard against accidents and OSHA citations by understanding the regulations that apply to your business, and implementing and managing programs to meet those needs.

OSHA's "Top 10"

1. Scaffolding

OSHA standard 1926.451 requires employers to provide scaffolding at heights of 10 feet or more. An estimated 2.3 million construction workers, or 65 percent of the construction industry, work on scaffolds frequently.

Protecting these workers from scaffold-related accidents may prevent some of the 4,500 injuries and 50 deaths every year, which cost American employers \$90 million in workdays lost. In a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) study, 72 percent of workers injured in scaffold accidents attributed the accident either to the planking or support giving way, or to the worker slipping or being struck by a falling object. All of these accidents can be controlled by compliance with OSHA standards.

2. Fall Protection

OSHA standard 1926.501 protects construction workers working over 6 feet. It provides guidance for fall protection requirements, how to select the most appropriate fall system and installation of fall protection systems.

In 2004, the BLS reported that 1,224 construction workers died on the job, with 36 percent of those fatalities resulting from falls. Falls may result from a number of factors, including unstable working surfaces, misuse of fall protection equipment, and human error. Studies have shown that the use of guardrails, fall arrest systems, safety nets, covers, and travel restriction systems can prevent many of the deaths and injuries that result from falls.

3. Hazard Communication

OSHA standard 1910.1200 governs hazard communication to workers about chemicals produced or imported into the workplace. Failure to develop and maintain a written program, failure to maintain training, failure to have a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical and lack of employee training typically top the citation list.

4. Respiratory Protection

From program administration to worksite-specific procedures to respirator use, standard 1910.134 provides employers guidance in establishing and maintaining a respiratory inspection program.

An estimated 5 million workers are required to wear respirators in 1.3 million workplaces throughout the United States. Respirators protect workers against insufficient oxygen environments, harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, gases, vapors, and sprays. These hazards may cause cancer, lung impairment, other diseases, or death.

5. Control of Hazardous Energy (lockout/tagout)

Standard 1910.147 provides guidance regarding the control of hazardous energy during the maintenance and servicing of machinery.

Approximately 3 million workers service equipment and face the greatest risk of injury if lockout/tagout is not properly implemented. Compliance with the lockout/tagout standard prevents an estimated 120 fatalities and 50,000 injuries each year. Workers injured on the job from exposure to hazardous energy lose an average of 24 workdays for recuperation. In a study conducted by the United Auto Workers (UAW), 20% of the fatalities that occurred among their members between 1973 and 1995 were attributed to inadequate hazardous energy control procedures specifically, lockout/tagout procedures.

6. Powered Industrial Trucks

Standard 1910.178 provides guidance about the design, maintenance and operations of powered industrial trucks, including forklifts and motorized hand trucks.

Each year, tens of thousands of injuries related to powered industrial trucks, or forklifts, occur in U.S. workplaces. Many employees are injured when lift trucks are inadvertently driven off loading docks, lifts fall between docks and an unsecured trailer, they are struck by a lift truck, or when they fall while on elevated pallets and tines.

According to OSHA, most incidents also involve property damage, including damage to overhead sprinklers, racking, pipes, walls, and machinery. Unfortunately, most employee injuries and property damage can be attributed to lack of safe operating procedures, lack of safety-rule enforcement and insufficient or inadequate training.

7. Electrical – Wiring (general industry)

Standard 1910.305 governs the grounding of electrical equipment, wiring and insulation. Common citations include failure to effectively close conductors entering boxes, cabinets or fittings and protect from abrasion; failure to provide all pull boxes, junction boxes and fittings with covers approved for the purpose; failure to connect flexible cords to devices and fittings so strain and relief is provided to prevent pull from being directly transmitted to joints or terminal screws; and using flexible cords and cables as a substitute for the fixed wiring of a structure.

8. Machine Guarding

Standard 1910.212 provides guidance about the necessary guarding needed to protect employees from a machine's moving parts.

Moving machine parts have the potential for causing severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, amputations, burns, or blindness. Safeguards are essential for protecting workers from these needless and preventable injuries.

Any machine part, function, or process that may cause injury must be safeguarded. When the operation of a machine or accidental contact with it can injure the operator or others in the vicinity, the hazards must be either eliminated or controlled.

9. Ladders - Construction

Standard 1925.1053 covers the general requirements for all ladder use.

When conducting construction inspections, OSHA looks for anything that can cause a fatality from falls, including ladders. Injuries typically occur when ladders are used for a purpose other than for which they were designed, using the top or top step of a stepladder as a step, failure to use ladders on stable and level surfaces, and not tagging and withdrawing defective ladders from service.

Most employee injuries can be attributed to insufficient or inadequate training and lack of following safe operating procedures.

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10. Electrical - General Requirements

OSHA Standard 1910.303 provides guidance regarding general safety requirements for designing electrical systems.

Electricity has long been recognized as a serious workplace hazard. OSHA's electrical standards are designed to protect employees exposed to dangers such as electric shock, electrocution, fires and explosions. Electrical hazards that top the electrical citation's list include the failure to install and use electrical equipment according to factory instructions, failure to guard electrical equipment, failure to identify disconnecting means and circuits, and not keeping work spaces clear.

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OSHA inspections can be stressful, but developing programs and following regulations shouldn't be. We can assist you in conducting a full OSHA program audit and help you develop and/or review your programs to ensure you're meeting regulation and recordkeeping requirements. Contact Markham F. Rollins III today at P 914-337-1833 to discuss your OSHA program needs.

Source: OSHA

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