

February 2003 - Most Frequently Cited OSHA Standards

What better way to know where you should look for potential OSHA violations than to investigate your compliance against the ten most common OSHA safety standard violations?

The National Federation of Independent Business assembled this list of the 10-workplace safety standards that are the most frequently violated. Taking steps to ensure compliance with these items will enhance your employee safety and be a good step toward overall better OSHA compliance. This abbreviated version of the NFIB list includes my comments.

1. Failure to have a written Hazard Communication Program.

Employers must have a written program that establishes methods of providing information on hazardous chemicals in the workplace. Elements of the program must include provisions for training, labeling, hazardous chemical list, identifying responsible parties, and having MSDS's for each chemical on the hazardous chemical list. Refer to Tab 17 in both the online and printed OSHA manual for complete details on this OSHA standard. Online address: <http://www.gawda.org/secure/cm/OSHA/tab17.pdf>

2. Not providing information and training on hazardous chemicals.

In your written Hazard Communication Program you must describe how you will inform and train your employees. However, you must execute the training according to the written program and maintain the training records. Refer to Tab 17 in both the online and printed OSHA manual for complete details on this OSHA standard. Online address: <http://www.gawda.org/secure/cm/OSHA/tab17.pdf>

3. No protection of electrical conductors going into boxes, cabinets or fittings. This is a where you might want to call in a licensed electrician or have your property and casualty insurer conduct this inspection.

4. Missing electrical covers and canopies. If your inspection identifies this as a problem, have a licensed electrician correct the problems. At the same time, you may want him to check all outlets for correct polarity because it is most likely the OSHA inspector will.

5. Incorrect polarity is a potential shock hazard and must be corrected immediately by a licensed electrician.

6. Tongue guards are missing or are not properly adjusted on abrasive wheel grinders. These guards must be adjusted downward as the abrasive wheel wears. Guards should always be within 1/4 inch of the wheel. The proper eye and face protection must always be worn when an abrasive wheel grinder is operated.

7. Not wearing hard hats in construction sites. If you have construction-taking place on site, all personnel entering the

construction area must wear hard hats. The hard hats must meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) specifications.

8. Failure to protect against falls. All work that is performed 6 feet or more from the ground or the next level below, requires the employee to be protected from falls by a guardrail system, safety net system, or other approved methods of personal fall arrest.

9. Inadequate number of portable fire extinguishers. Request your local fire department to make recommendation on the quantity, type and proper locations of fire extinguishers. Make sure your employees are trained in their use once a year.

10. Substandard use of flexible electrical cords. Residential grade extension cords are not designed for industrial type use. Heavy duty cords must be used and do not run them through wall, ceiling or floor openings. Flexible electrical cords are not a replacement for fixed, enclosed wiring.

11. Failure to record work-related injuries and illnesses on the OSHA Form 300 log. OSHA requires companies in our industry, with 11 or more employees, to maintain employee injury and illness records. Refer to Tab 26 in both the online and printed OSHA manual for complete details on the OSHA recordkeeping requirements. Online address: <http://www.gawda.org/secure/cm/OSHA/tab26.pdf>

The most widely accepted way to identify hazards is to conduct safety and health inspections. Here is the list of the top 10 OSHA violations. You may want to verify your compliance with these common OSHA violations and then include them on your inspection schedule.