

OSHA Receives More Money for Inspections

OSHA has received a 6% increase in federal funding for the rest of this fiscal year ending September 30th.

The new budget is set to help President Obama carry out his mission to reinvigorate the federal safety agency. The budget can be used to increase safety inspections.

Even before getting the funds OSHA has already been busy carrying out the President's mission.

No business is immune. A review of recent citations issued by OSHA shows it priorities.

The hit list?

- **PPE** (Personal Protective Equipment)
- **Trenching**
- **Falls**
- **Combustible Dust**
- **Hearing Protection**

Many fines were much larger than in recent years. The fines targeted all types of companies, including manufacturing, construction, warehousing, and services such as educational facilities.

For more information about recent citations within a specific industry please visit OSHA's website at "www.osha.gov/pls/imis/industry.html".

Preparing for OSHA Inspectors/Inspections

You can never be too prepared for an OSHA inspection. Yes, it can be nerve wracking when an OSHA inspector arrives at your place of business or project location. Preparation is the key to making sure everything runs smoothly.

Here are some suggestions from companies' who have experienced an OSHA inspection:

Have more than one person prepared to present your company. This is a good idea just in case your primary person is sick or on vacation. All backups should be just as knowledgeable about hazards, controls, and applicable safety programs as the primary person. They should be able to accompany the inspector at all times and be able to answer any questions the inspector may have.

Make a good first impression. Upon arrival ask the inspector to wear any protection equipment (PPE) that is needed in your facility or jobsite. Then, take the inspector to the location of your safety plan. Make sure your plan is neatly kept in binders.

Conduct spot interviews periodically with employees. To make sure they have retained important safety rules. Inspectors will interview employees during their visits, so your spot checks will be a good test.

Periodically look up the most frequent cited standards for your industry. OSHA's website allows you to do this by Standard Industrial Code (SIC) you can visit <http://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/industry.html> for detailed information.

Quote of the Month

"Safety is a cheap and effective insurance policy."



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MONTHLY TOOLBOX TALK

MATERIAL HANDLING

There are a lot of hazards associated with material handling. Materials come in various sizes, weights, and shapes. Materials are constantly being moved around the worksite. One study concluded that 80% of workplace injuries were related in some way to material handling. We have to determine the best way to move and handle all kinds of materials with maximum safety.

Goods, equipment, tools and construction materials are regularly moved around during all phases of a project. Deliveries start early in the morning and continue throughout the day. Material handling is a big part of construction work. You have many opportunities each day to make the safe choice and avoid an injury; whether it's a sliver in your thumb or getting your foot crushed under a pallet. If you only think about material handling when the item is very expensive or extremely hazardous, you need to think again.

Most of the materials we use are handled manually. Always use proper lifting techniques. Protect your hands, fingers, and toes. Wear gloves to avoid cuts from sharp or jagged edges. Be sure you allow enough clearance so you can avoid wedging your fingers between pieces of material. A good pair of sturdy safety shoes or boots will protect your toes.

When a load is too heavy to handle alone, get someone to help. Call a co-worker, use a cart, dolly, or hand truck; or call for a forklift or crane. When a crane is handling a load, you must be alert and stand clear. Don't stand, walk or work under crane booms, buckets or suspended loads. If you're in charge of rigging or preparing these loads, be sure to have the proper slings and carriers to secure them. The crane operator is responsible for making sure that the load isn't too heavy for the crane. Whatever type of help you choose, make sure that the entire load is stable and secure before you move it. Never permit a load to be lowered, raised or swung over a worker's head. When it's necessary to guide a load, use a tag line. When the load is being placed, keep your feet and all other parts of your body out from under it. Don't get in the way of the load so you won't be struck or crushed.

Use your head – not to stop a falling object, but to make sure an object doesn't fall on you or someone else. When working above ground level, pay attention to where and how you stack material. Don't put piles or stacks too close to the edge of a floor, stairway or excavation. By the way, while using your head, keep it covered and protected with a hard hat.

If the task requires unloading a truck, keep in mind that the load may have shifted during transit. When you remove the straps or chains the load could shift or slide further, so make sure you are in a safe position. Placing a load on a truck may cause the truck to tilt or even sink into the mud; plan for these possibilities.

Proper stacking of materials is also very important. The lay down area should be on firm, level ground, and should be a safe distance from traffic areas. Stack the materials so that they will not slip, slide, or fall over.

Material handling takes place all the time. When material is delivered or you have to move it from one place to another, do so safely. Check for ignition sources before you put down a load of combustible material. Wear work gloves to prevent cuts, slivers and blisters. Make sure that all of your body parts are out of the way when cutting banding or strapping. After banding is cut get it picked up and disposed of correctly so it's not a tripping hazard. Verify that the floor, decking, planking or ground will safely support the load before you put it down.

You can't avoid handling materials, but you can avoid being injured in the process. Knowledge and common sense will prevent injuries when handling materials.

Too many people take material handling for granted both at home and at work. Use common sense and good judgment. Don't underestimate the importance of material handling safety.

Conscientious handling of materials reduces damage and prevents unnecessary injuries.

Remember: Forklift Operators have to be trained and certified. It's not just a good idea, it's the law.