

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of February 6, 2017 – OSHA's Top 10 for 2016

As each year nears its end, OSHA tabulates information on workplaces throughout the country for the purpose of understanding where organizations need to strengthen their safety programs. One of the most popular metrics is the compilation of the most cited OSHA violations for the year. While an OSHA violation is not necessarily synonymous with an accident or illness, such information can provide supporting evidence where workplace risks exist, and therefore let OSHA, as well as S&H professionals understand where concerted efforts need to focus. This information can be found on the OSHA website, “www.OSHA.gov.”

For this past year (2016) OSHA's Top 10 list, once again, starts with Fall Protection (1926.501). Violations within this category have been the top cited violations for the sixth straight year. Hazard Communication (1910.1200) and Scaffolding (1926.451) complete the top three most-cited categories: all unchanged from FY 2015.

Rounding out the top five most cited violations are Respiratory Protection (1910.134) and Lockout/Tagout (1910.147).

OSHA issued a total of more than 35,000 citations in its Top 10 categories during fiscal 2016, which ended Sept. 30.

Here is a breakdown of the OSHA Top 10 for FY 2016, showing the specific regulation, numbers of violations and specific scenarios that were the major contributors within the category.

1. Fall Protection (29 CFR 1926.501) – 6906 total violations, with the Residential Construction and unprotected sides and edges receiving the majority of OSHA citations
2. Hazard Communication (29 CFR 1910.1200) - 5665 total violations – with improper implementation, employee training and development/maintaining SDSs receiving the majority of OSHA violations.
3. Scaffolding (29 CFR 1926.451) – 3900 violations – with protecting employees from falling 10 feet, incorrect use of cross-bracing for scaffold access, incorrect decking and fall protection concerns comprise the top OSHA citations.
4. Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134) – 3573 violations – with medical evaluations, fit testing, and requirements for wearing respiratory protection comprise the top OSHA citations.
5. Lockout/Tagout (29 CFR 1910.147) – 3406 violations – with general provisions, an energy control program, periodic inspections and training, comprising the majority of OSHA citations.
6. Powered Industrial Trucks (29 CFR 1910.178) – 2855 violations – safe operations, 3-year operator evaluations and operator certification and proper repair/maintenance comprise the top OSHA citations.
7. Ladders (29 CFR 1926.1053) - 2625 violations – portable ladder access and improper use comprise the majority of OSHA violations.
8. Machine Guarding (29 CFR 1910.212) – 2448 violations – providing machine guarding methods to install machine guarding to protect operator and other employees from machine hazards comprising the majority of OSHA citations.



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9. Electrical Wiring Methods – (29 CFR 1910.305) – 1937 violations – improper use of flexible cords, and effectively closing cutout boxes, cabinets or fittings comprise the majority of OSHA violations.
10. Electrical - General Requirements - (2910.303) – 1704 violations – Installation and use and guarding of live parts comprise the top OSHA citations.

As a comparison, take a look at last year's (2015) Top 10 OSHA Citations:

1. Fall protection, construction (29 CFR 1926.501)
2. Hazard communication standard, general industry (29 CFR 1910.1200)
3. Scaffolding, general requirements, construction (29 CFR 1926.451)
4. Respiratory protection, general industry (29 CFR 1910.134)
5. Control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout), general industry (29 CFR 1910.147)
6. Powered industrial trucks, general industry (29 CFR 1910.178)
7. Ladders, construction (29 CFR 1926.1053)
8. Electrical, wiring methods, components and equipment, general industry (29 CFR 1910.305)
9. Machinery and Machine Guarding, general requirements (29 CFR 1910.212)
10. Electrical systems design, general requirements, general industry (29 CFR 1910.303)

As one can see, there hasn't been much of a change from 2015 to 2016.

Another topic that OSHA tracks is the number of serious violations that occur in a calendar year. A "serious" violation is defined by OSHA as "one in which there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result, and the employer knew or should have known of the hazard.

A comparison with the top-10 violations, the top-10 *serious* violations seem to be an exact footprint. While the order is slightly different, Fall Protection, Hazard Communication and Scaffolding, once again, rank # 1, 2, and 3.

So the question is, "What have we learned by examining these most-cited OSHA regulations?" Or maybe the question to ask is, "Have we learned anything at all?" Are workers not learning or are employers not communicating to their workforce in an effective manner? Maybe employers are just unaware of the attention and focus needed to ensure their employees' S&H with respect to these regulations.

There is an adage within the profession of S&H: That is, "Frequency Breeds Severity." Simply put, as the number of incidents within a specific hazard category continues, the inevitability of a serious injury/illness may be just around the corner. If American workplaces cannot learn from our near-misses, or mere non-compliances within such areas as fall protection, scaffolding, use of forklifts, ladders and machinery and electrical systems, then as each day goes by, the likelihood of a person sustaining a serious injury becomes an increasing certainty.

Take care of all your memories. For you cannot relive them. Bob Dylan

