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Some items to watch for out of Washington in 2015

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a full agenda for 2015. Look for more enforcement during this calendar year, now that changes for reporting have been adopted. Following is a list of a few items to be on the lookout for in 2015.

Continued emphasis on whistleblower programs

OSHA receives around 6,000 Whistleblower complaints per year. In most investigations by OSHA, it looks for what relief will make the complainant whole. From the employer perspective, it is important to investigate each complaint and know the whistleblowers' legal protections under the 22 various federal statutes overseen by OSHA.

Reporting changes

Revised injury and illness reporting rules went into effect January 1, 2015. A new rule requires reporting within 24 hours of any work-related in-patient hospitalization, amputations, or loss of any eye; etc. Watch for a proposal coming from OSHA to submit data from your company's 300-log electronically, which would make it public. No deadline exists.

Globally harmonized system

All new chemical labels and Safety Data Sheets ("SDS") must conform to the Globally Harmonized System ("GHS") of classification and labeling of chemicals by June 1, 2015. For employers using chemicals, labels and SDSs will now need to comply with the GHS.

Permissible exposure limits

Some observers believe OSHA will make an attempt this year to update its chemical standards, particularly the permissible exposure limits ("PEL"). OSHA is expected to publish the results of the requests for information soon, but it will likely be a while before OSHA proposes a revised rule.

Process Safety Management (PSM) regulations

OSHA has a presidential mandate to review its PSM regulations. So later this year, there could be revised regulations for employers subject to the PSM standard.

Increased enforcement

Look for a continuation of the theme of the past four years —

stepped-up enforcement in 2015 and 2016. This prediction stems from the fact that the average cost of a federal OSHA fine has increased each year for the past four years and that the number of companies landing in the OSHA Severe Violator Enforcement Program has increased. There may not be a lot of new regulations; instead, employers should expect an increased OSHA presence and increased severity of any inspections. — Source: *Kristin R.B. White of the law firm JacksonKelly in Denver, Colorado*

CITATIONS & FINES

SRS INDUSTRIES

DBA WHITEHALL INDUSTRIES

5600 Commerce Dr., Paducah

Inspection site: 5600 Commerce Dr., Paducah

9-29-2014

\$41,000

Serious

- Operators of 10-ton overhead crane were not properly trained to operate it, creating a falling-load hazard or failure/collapse hazard. \$7,000
- Employer did not conduct workplace hazard assessment, including for burns and electrical shock. \$7,000
- Employer did not have a written energy-control program. \$7,000
- Eight employees operating powered industrial trucks were not properly trained to do so (corrected during inspection). \$7,000
- Alloy steel chain sling on 10-ton overhead crane was not inspected daily before being put in use, exposing employees to amputation hazard. \$5,000
- Employees working around potential electrical hazards were not provided with nor wearing electrical PPE; employees were not provided with insulated tools or handling equipment. \$7,000

Other

- No one was trained to render first aid (corrected during inspection). \$0