

New auto accident-reporting rules in effect for Oregon employers

by Bend Weekly News Sources

Oregon employers are now required to report fatal work-related motor vehicle accidents to Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) under recently updated safety and health rules that took effect on January 1. Motor vehicle accidents nationally represent one-quarter of the total for workplace deaths. According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, motor vehicle deaths on the job rose 2 percent in the United States during 2005. Motor vehicle accidents have been the leading cause of fatal workplace injuries in Oregon four of the past five years, accounting for 26 percent of fatalities compensable in the workers' compensation system between 2001 and 2005. "We haven't done everything we can to create truly safe workplaces in Oregon until we address the largest single source of on-the-job fatalities in the state and in the nation -- motor vehicles," said Michael Wood, administrator of Oregon OSHA. "And our starting point needs to be a recognition that such deaths are workplace deaths. We need to track them and to treat them with the same seriousness and careful analysis that we try to provide whenever an employee is killed on the job." As has been the case for many years, fatal heart attacks that occur at work also must be reported to Oregon OSHA. Not all fatal heart attacks reported to Oregon OSHA result in an investigation. Workplace deaths (including heart attacks) must be reported to Oregon OSHA at (800) 922-2689 within eight hours of the employer being aware of the incident. Workplace accidents that send three or more employees to the hospital must also be reported within eight hours while employers must report an incident that requires the overnight hospitalization and medical treatment of a worker within 24 hours. Oregon OSHA updated reporting requirements in September 2006 following public hearings on proposed rule changes in August. Additional resources and information about motor vehicle safety at work are available on the Oregon OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org, under "Vehicles" in the A-Z Topic Index. Oregon OSHA, a division of the Department of Consumer & Business Services, enforces the state's workplace safety and health rules and works to improve workplace safety and health for all Oregon workers. For more information, go to www.orosha.org. The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest business regulatory and consumer protection agency. For more information, visit www.dcbs.oregon.gov.

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