

OSHA identifies 14,000 workplaces with high injury and illness rates

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

WASHINGTON - The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced today that approximately 14,000 employers have been notified that injury and illness rates at their worksites are higher than average and assistance is available to help them better protect their employees.

In a letter sent this month to those employers, OSHA explained the notification was a proactive step to motivate employers to take steps now to reduce those rates and improve the safety and health environment in their workplaces.

"This identification process is meant to raise awareness that injuries and illnesses are high at these facilities," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke, Jr. "Injuries and illnesses are costly to employers in both personal and financial terms. Our goal is to identify workplaces where injury and illness rates are high and to persuade employers to use resources at their disposal to address these hazards and reduce occupational injuries and illnesses."

Establishments with the nation's high workplace injury and illness rates were identified by OSHA through employer-reported data from a 2006 survey of 80,000 worksites (the survey collected data from calendar year 2005). The workplaces identified had 5.3 or more injuries or illnesses resulting in days away from work, restricted work activity, or job transfer (DART) for every 100 full-time workers. The national average during 2006 was 2.4 DART instances for every 100 workers.

Employers receiving the letters were also provided copies of their injury and illness data, along with a list of the most frequently violated OSHA standards for their specific industry. The letter also offered assistance in helping turn the numbers around by suggesting, among other things, the use of free OSHA safety and health consultation services provided through the states, state workers' compensation agencies, insurance carriers, or outside safety and health consultants.

The 14,000 sites are listed alphabetically, by state, on OSHA's Web site at: http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/foia/hot_12.html.

The list does not designate those earmarked for any future inspections. An announcement of targeted inspections will be made later this year. Also, the worksites listed are establishments in states covered by federal OSHA; the list does not include employers in the 21 states, and Puerto Rico, who operate OSHA-approved state plans covering the private sector.

OSHA's data collection initiative is conducted each year to provide the agency with a clearer picture of those establishments with higher than average injury and illness rates. Information obtained from the survey gives OSHA the opportunity to place inspection resources where they're needed most and also helps the agency plan outreach and compliance assistance programs where they will be most beneficial.

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