By the Numbers: Workplace Inspections

DID YOU KNOW?

The lead role in the U.S. to regulate, and monitor workplace safety resides with OSHA, a federal agency. The following encapsulates OSHA's resources and monitoring role.

Federal OSHA coverage

Federal OSHA is a small agency; with our state partners we have approximately 2,100 inspectors responsible for the health and safety of 130 million workers, employed at more than 8 million worksites around the nation – which translates to about one compliance officer for every 59,000 workers.

Federal OSHA has 10 regional offices and 85 local area offices.

OSHA BUDGET

FY 2017: $552,787,0003
FY 2018: $552,787,000
FY 2019: $557,787,000

OSHA INSPECTIONS

FY 2018 total federal inspections: 32,020
FY 2018 total State Plan inspections: 40,993

WORKER INJURIES, ILLNESSES, AND FATALITIES

5,147 workers died on the job in 2017 (3.5 per 100,000 full-time equivalent workers) – on average, more than 99 a week or more than 14 deaths every day.

CONSTRUCTION'S "FATAL FOUR"

Out of 4,674 worker fatalities in private industry in calendar year 2017, 971 or 20.7% were in construction – that is, one in five worker deaths last year were in construction. The leading

causes of private sector worker deaths (excluding highway collisions) in the construction industry were falls, followed by struck by object, electrocution, and caught-in/between. These "Fatal Four" were responsible for more than half (59.9%) the construction worker deaths in 2017, BLS reports. **Eliminating the Fatal Four would save 582 workers' lives in America every year**.

- Falls – 381 out of 971 total deaths in construction in CY 2017 (39.2%)
- Struck by Object – 80 (8.2%)
- Electrocutions – 71 (7.3%)
- Caught-in/between* – 50 (5.1%)

(*This category includes construction workers killed when caught-in or compressed by equipment or objects, and struck, caught, or crushed in collapsing structure, equipment, or material)

TAKE AWAY

OSHA is making a difference by making workplace safer despite lack of resources and money.

- In more than four decades, OSHA and our state partners, coupled with the efforts of employers, safety and health professionals, unions and advocates, have had a dramatic effect on workplace safety.
- Worker deaths in America are down-on average, from about 38 worker deaths a day in 1970 to 14 a day in 2017.
- Worker injuries and illnesses are down-from 10.9 incidents per 100 workers in 1972 to 2.8 per 100 in 2017

KEEP IN MIND

Workplace inspections help prevent accidents, injuries and illness. Workplace inspections are a basic necessity of any safety program. A critical examination of the workplace will identify and record hazards for corrective action.

Objects, equipment, people and even animals find their way into work areas – Hazards

Types of workplace Hazards

- Safety hazards such as those caused by inadequate machine guards, unsafe workplace conditions, unsafe work practices.
- Biological hazards caused by organisms such as viruses, bacteria, fungi and parasites.
- Chemical hazards caused by a solid, liquid, vapour, gas, dust, fume or mist.
- Ergonomic hazards caused by physiological and psychological demands on the worker, such as repetitive and forceful movements, awkward postures arising from improper work methods, and improperly designed workstations, tools, and equipment.
- Physical hazards caused by noise, vibration, energy, weather, heat, cold, electricity, radiation and pressure.
- Psychosocial hazards that can affect mental health or well-being such as overwork, stress, bullying, or violence.

Planning is essential for effective inspection

- Every inspection must examine who, what, where, when and how. Pay particular attention to items that are or are most likely to develop into unsafe or unhealthy conditions because of stress, wear, impact, vibration, heat, corrosion, chemical reaction or misuse.
- Look at all workplace elements – the people, the environment, the equipment and the process. The environment includes such hazards as noise, vibration, lighting, temperature, and ventilation. Equipment includes materials, tools and apparatus for producing a product or a service. The process involves how the worker interacts with the other elements in a series of tasks or operations.

Three types of inspection reports

Ongoing

Supervisors and workers continually conduct ongoing inspections as part of their job responsibilities. Such inspections identify hazardous conditions and either correct them immediately or report them for corrective action. The frequency of these inspections varies with the amount and conditions of equipment use. Daily

checks by users assure that the equipment meets minimum acceptable safety requirements.

Pre-operation

Pre-operation checks involve inspections of new or modified equipment or processes. Often these are done after workplace shutdowns.

Periodic

Periodic inspections are regular, planned inspections of the critical components of equipment or systems that have a high potential for causing serious injury or illness. The inspections are often part of preventive maintenance procedures or hazard control programs. Laws and regulations may specify that qualified or competent persons must inspect certain types of equipment, such as elevators, boilers, pressure vessels, scaffolding, and fire extinguishers at determined points in the work process and at regular intervals.