

Strategies for Avoiding OSHA Fines and Citations

An accident and injury does not have to happen for Cal/OSHA to levy a citation and fine to employers. A serious violation “shall be deemed to exist in a place of employment if there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a violation...” The initial base penalty for a serious violation is \$180,000 and can be up to \$25,000 for each violation depending on the gravity of the situation.

The best strategy is to be proactive with your safety efforts. Unfortunately, too many times safety activities are implemented in response to a negative event. The accident has occurred and now the employer is looking at fines, citations and the money needed to remedy the situation.

Pro-active safety means you are taking effective measures to reduce, control, eliminate or transfer the risk. This is accomplished using an effective hazard identification process where the operations are examined from a “hazard analysis” or “risk assessment” process. Hazard analysis involves looking at the hazard groups (chemicals, electrical, physical, biological, etc.) to determine if the controls are effective.

The risk assessment and hazard identification should be part of every manager’s responsibility and obligation to the organization. Managers and supervisors know the operations best and are in a position to affect change for the better, especially when it comes to safety. Cal/OSHA mandates that this process be in place and who better than your existing staff to implement the process.

Hold you managers accountable by grading the quality of the hazard identification or risk assessment process and have them include a review of safety activities in your regular management meetings. You already measure production and quality in your meetings – include safety as that third pillar of excellence.

You will find that a safe organization is highly effective. Pro-active safety minimizes the negative events that take your managers away from doing productive and profit making endeavors.

For more information please contact

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