

# Government shutdown could impact workplace safety

Congress has been trying to pass a new budget deal to prevent a government shutdown. Unfortunately, recent reports show that not much progress has been made by lawmakers and the deadline for passing the budget is only getting closer.

If a budget deal isn't reached and there is a government shutdown, what would that mean for workers in the United States? A director at the Center for Effective Government believes that workplace safety will get worse and millions of workers would have a higher risk for suffering a workplace injury.

Why would workplace safety be impacted by a government shutdown? The director said that during government shutdowns in the past, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration reported that there would be fewer OSHA employees working. In fact, only 10 percent of OSHA employees would likely be working during a government shutdown, meaning that fewer workplace safety inspections and complaints would be reviewed.

If OSHA has fewer employees to inspect workplaces and address potential safety hazards, many workers could be at risk for being in an accident or suffering an injury. The impact on workplace safety could be significant as OSHA usually receives up to 500 complaints from workers every day about safety hazards and risks in the workplace.

Depending on how long the government is shutdown, workplace safety would only get worse as complaints or safety violations increase.

OSHA already has a difficult time inspecting workplaces in the U.S. and issuing fines for violations. If the government shuts down, workplace safety issues may not be addressed or

inspected for quite some time. Workers and employers need to be aware of workplace safety hazards and take steps to prevent accidents and injuries, especially if the government is shut down.

**Source:** EHS Today, "[Government Shutdown Would Jeopardize Worker Safety](#)," Josh Cable, Sept, 26, 2013