

OSHA not able to inspect as many workplaces during shutdown

The federal government shutdown could have a significant impact on the safety of workers in Pennsylvania and throughout the country. Due to the federal government shutdown, the Labor Department will not be able to continue most of their investigations into workplace safety issues and hazards.

The Labor Department said that only 18 percent of their workers will be working during the shutdown. That is only 2,954 workers compared to the 16,304 that are usually employed by the DOL. In addition to reducing the amount of DOL workers, the impact to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is much worse.

As part of the shutdown, OSHA will only be able to continue inspecting workplaces that have a threat of immediate danger or fatal harm to workers, according to the DOL. They did say that they will continue to inspect any safety issues that are deemed a fatal safety risk to workers, and they will continue to inspect mining sites in the U.S.

When the government is running normal, OSHA does not have enough funding in their budget to complete as many workplace safety inspections as they would like. The shutdown and lack of workplace investigations could result in very dangerous conditions for workers in the U.S. as OSHA will not be able to inspect workplaces until the federal government is back in full force. Hopefully the shutdown won't cause an increase in workplace accidents and injuries, but since OSHA cannot perform as many safety inspections it would not be surprising if workplaces saw an increase during this time.

Workplace safety is a very important issue. While Congress

debates potential budgets, workers throughout the country are at risk for being injured or killed on the job. Workers should know that their employer is still responsible for providing a safe working environment, and workers who notice safety hazards should report them immediately to their supervisor to prevent any accidents or injuries in the workplace.

Source: Huffington Post, "[Government Shutdown to Hit Labor Department Workplace Safety, EEOC Discrimination Investigations](#)," Dave Jamieson, Sept. 30, 2013