

What to know about OSHA workplace inspections

Workplace safety is an important issue for workers and employers. Unfortunately, workplace accidents happen all the time in Pennsylvania. Many workplace accidents and injuries are preventable if only employers would follow safety standards and regulations like providing training to employers and making sure hazards in the workplace are reduced.

Federal workplace safety and health regulations are supposed to keep workplaces free from hazards that can cause injuries and illnesses to workers. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is in charge of enforcing workplace safety requirements, and inspecting workplaces to make sure hazards and safety violations are reduced.

OSHA inspections are conducted by experienced industrial and safety professionals. OSHA inspectors will come into the workplace to make sure the company is in compliance with OSHA safety requirements. OSHA inspectors also help workplaces reduce potential hazards that will hopefully result in fewer accidents and injuries.

Unfortunately, OSHA is not able to inspect the millions of worksites in the U.S. each year. So how does OSHA decide which workplaces to inspect? The agency tries to focus on the most dangerous workplaces.

OSHA makes it a priority to inspect workplaces that pose serious or fatal risks to workers. After that, the list of priority follows this order: fatal or catastrophic workplace accidents, workplace complaints of serious risks and hazards, referrals of dangerous workplaces from other agencies or individuals, follow-up inspections of workplaces that violated safety regulations in the past, and planned investigations.

OSHA investigations can result in immediate recommendations for safety improvements if the inspector notices hazards and safety violations during their walk-through inspection. The inspector will also have a closed conference with the employer to discuss the findings, as well as discuss if any penalties or citations may be issued. OSHA has six months after an inspection to issue a citation and penalty for any safety violations found during the inspection.

OSHA inspections are supposed to keep workplaces safe and reduce accidents and injuries. Workers who see hazards in the workplace or are at risk for being injured at work can anonymously inform OSHA about their concerns.

Source: OSHA, "[OSHA Inspections](#)," Nov. 6, 2013