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2014 Budget Fully Funds OSHA's Enforcement Activities

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From Business and Legal Reports (BLR)

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With OSHA primed with funds for enforcement in 2014, it's wise for employers to closely examine workplace compliance with OSHA standards. The latest budget signed into law by President Obama includes \$552.2 million in funding for OSHA, including approximately \$208 million for enforcement. Although the total amount falls \$18.3 million short of the \$570.5 million the agency requested, the final budget fully funds OSHA's requested enforcement dollars. Overall, the new funding levels represent an increase of \$17 million, or 3.2%, over the funding OSHA received during the sequestration-impacted fiscal year (FY) 2013.

So what does OSHA plan to spend it's money on in 2014? Here are the highlights:

- \$207.8 million will be earmarked for federal enforcement activities. This amount is similar to the FY 2013 final spending levels because OSHA shifted its funds towards enforcement from other programs during sequestration.
- \$143.9 million will be used for compliance assistance, including federal assistance, state consultation grants, and training grants.
- \$100 million will be available for grants to states that operate their own occupational safety and health agencies.
- \$34.3 million will be used for safety and health statistics.
- \$20 million will be available for safety and health standards.
- \$24.3 million will go towards technical support.
- \$17 million will fund whistleblower protection programs.



News & Notes

- The overall goal is to secure safe and healthy workplaces.
- Focus on the four leading causes of workplace deaths.
- Inspections targeted at the most hazardous workplaces.

OSHA says it plans to use its funding to advance its overall goals of securing safe and healthy workplaces and ensuring that workers have a voice in the workplace. In particular, the agency plans to focus on high-hazard industries and devote attention to the four leading causes of workplace deaths: falls, electrocutions, caught-in and caught-between incidents, and struck-by incidents.

OSHA plans to use both enforcement and outreach efforts to work toward these goals. According to OSHA's 2014 Budget Justification, the agency plans to use its enforcement funding to conduct 39,250 inspections in 2014. These inspections will be targeted to find and address the most hazardous workplaces under the agency's new weighted inspection system. In addition to focusing on serious hazards, OSHA plans to encourage its compliance officers and area offices to conduct complex inspections, such as those for Process Safety Management.





News & Notes

- OSHA expected to keep up its pace for recordkeeping violations.
- RED signage identifies serious life threatening hazards.
- YELLOW signage warn about potential hazards.
- GREEN signage provide general safety information.



OSHA has been Stepping up its Pace for Fining Companies

Since 2009, OSHA has stepped up its pace for fining companies for recordkeeping violations, and it's expected to keep aggressively citing and fining for recordkeeping violations. Especially those that are willful. Earlier this year, OSHA fined two Texas manufacturers for failing to maintain recordkeeping forms for 2012 and 2013. OSHA's ongoing enforcement targets employers it believes under-record or improperly record injury and illness data through recordkeeping inspec-

tions, and the purposes of the increased recordkeeping enforcement are to identify what is going on and determining how serious the problem is, to send a message to companies through citations and penalties that non-compliant recordkeeping will not be tolerated, to assure that recordkeeping is done properly in order to have accurate data with which to make decisions. Also, a number of regulations are being considered that will ultimately affect recordkeeping compliance, including new rules on exempt industries, on sub-

mitting data electronically, on statutes of limitations for recordkeeping, and injury and illness protection programs.

Having an effective and consistent program in place for enforcing safety rules, performance, and behavior is vital for a successful safety program. Employer Flexible Risk department can assist our clients by providing a Risk Control roadmap for developing and implementing an effective strategy to manage your Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Employer Flexible Safety & Risk

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Identifying Safety Signage

OSHA requires, in 29 CFR 1910.145, that accident prevention signs and tags be used in any area where not identifying a hazard could lead to accidental injury to workers or the public or to property damage.

Red is for danger.

Red danger signs and tags with contrasting black or white lettering are used only in areas where an immediate, serious hazard—one that can cause death or serious injury—exists. Flammable liquids are typically marked in red. Red markings are also used for some safety equipment, such as emergency stop bars, buttons, and switches.

Yellow is for caution.

Yellow and black caution signs and tags warn about potential hazards or unsafe practices that could cause minor injuries. Wet floors, radiation, and "Do Not Enter" signs are often found in the form of yellow caution signs.

Green is for safety.

Safety instruction signs have a white background, a green panel, and black and white letters or markings. These signs provide general safety information. For example, they are used to mark the location of emergency exits, first-aid kits, and safety equipment.