

Top 10 OSHA Violations of 2011

Year after year, the list of the 10 most frequently cited OSHA violations remains essentially the same. Some standards may swap positions, or a particular standard may creep up the list, but the basic layout goes unchanged.

But this does not imply OSHA is not doing its job, or that businesses are not learning how to avoid these hazards. In an interview with *Safety+Health*, Patrick Kapust, OSHA's deputy director of the Directorate of Enforcement Programs, said the data found in the Top 10 list is not meant to gauge how well OSHA is performing or how safe businesses in the country are. This list is at its best when used by employers as a tool to improve safety at their worksites, he said. "An employer who may be interested in what are the possible hazards in their workplace could look at the [Top 10] list and see if they're covering all hazards and assessing the kind of changes they may have to make to their safety and health program," Kapust told *Safety+Health*.



Kapust urged employers to look specifically at the subsections of the standards and use other tools at their disposal to create a safer workplace, including contacting OSHA assistance programs or downloading compliance materials from the OSHA website. "If they have questions, we want employers to ask us so we can get the information out," he said.

The following data is OSHA's Top 10 list of the most frequently cited violations for fiscal year 2011, covering the period of Oct. 1, 2010, through Sept. 30, 2011.

1. Fall Protection – 7,139 violations

Fall protection topped the list this year, switching places with last year's first place holder, Scaffolding. OSHA said 260 workers died in 2011 from falls, which continue to be the leading cause of death in construction.

The majority of fall protection citations were issued to residential construction contractors.

2. Scaffolding – 7,069 violations

Coming in a close second place was Scaffolding. OSHA noted that incidents involving this category often result from improper placement and setup of a scaffold. Scaffolds higher than 10 feet or with improper planking made up the bulk of these violations.

3. Hazard Communication – 6,538 violations

OSHA said most violations involved not having a written Hazard Communication program, a lack of a training program, and a lack of MSDS management system.

4. Respiratory Protection – 3,944 violations

Roughly five million workers in the U.S. are required to wear respirators. OSHA said employers must provide workers with proper medical evaluations and fit testing. Also, OSHA noted that the majority of cited employers had no written program in place.

5. Lockout/Tagout – 3,639 violations

Not following proper Lockout/Tagout procedures can result in unexpected energization of parts and a release of hazardous energy. This standard prevents 50,000 injuries and 120 fatalities a year, OSHA said. On average, a worker spends 24 days away from work to recover from a Lockout/Tagout injury.

6. Electrical (Wiring) – 3,584 violations

Working with electricity involves working on overhead lines, circuit assemblies, cables harnesses, and other equipment. Flexible cords and cables continue to be the primary culprits in wiring violations.

7. Powered Industrial Trucks – 3,432 violations

OSHA said there were 8,410 injuries in the U.S. in 2009 related to forklifts. Most violations focused on safe operation procedures and proper training of forklift operators.

8. Ladders – 3,244 violations

Ladders make up about 25 percent of falls, OSHA said. Hazards include improper use of siderails, unintended use of ladders, and defective ladders.

9. Electrical – 2,863 violations

Many violations involve not following electrical installation requirements, but others include labeling and instruction procedures and proper work space.

10. Machine Guarding – 2,556 violations

Improper machine guarding can result in broken bones, finger lacerations, and hand crushes. In 2009, 5,930 workers suffered amputations from machine-related incidents.

Sources:

<http://www.nsc.org/safetyhealth/pages/oshatop10-1211.aspx>

<http://ohsonline.com/articles/2011/11/02/fall-protection-tops-oshas-2011-violations-list.aspx>



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