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# OSHA's Field Operations Manual (FOM)

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# OSHA INSTRUCTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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**DIRECTIVE NUMBER:** CPL 02-00-148

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 3/26/2009

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**SUBJECT:** Field Operations Manual (FOM)

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## ABSTRACT

- Purpose:** This Instruction implements the OSHA Field Operations Manual (FOM), and replaces the September 26, 1994 Instruction that implemented the Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM). The FOM is a revision of OSHA's enforcement policies and procedures manual that provides the field offices a reference document for identifying the responsibilities associated with the majority of their inspection duties.
- Scope:** OSHA-wide.
- References:** Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1903.6, Advance Notice of Inspections; 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1903.14, Policy Regarding Employee Rescue Activities; 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1903.19, Abatement Verification; 29 Code of Federal Regulations §1904.39, Reporting Fatalities and Multiple Hospitalizations to OSHA; and Housing for Agricultural Workers: Final Rule, Federal Register, March 4, 1980 (45 FR 14180).
- Cancellations:** OSHA Instruction ADM 01-00-002, Administrative Subpoenas, August 19, 1991; OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-045, Field Operations Manual, Chapter VI, Sections D, Handling Monies Received from Employers, and E, Debt Collection Procedures, March 3, 1995; OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-045, Field Operations Manual, Chapter XI, Migrant Labor Camps, March 3, 1995; OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-103, Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM), September 26, 1994; and OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-112, National Quick-Fix Program, August 2, 1996.
- State Impact:** Notice of Intent and Adoption required. See paragraph VI.
- Action Offices:** National, Regional, and Area Offices
- Originating Office:** Directorate of Enforcement Programs

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By and Under the Authority of

Donald G. Shalhoub  
Deputy Assistant Secretary

## **Executive Summary**

This Instruction cancels and replaces OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-103, Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM), issued September 26, 1994, and two of the three remaining parts of the prior Field Operations Manual, CPL 02-00-045, which are still in effect. The one remaining part of the prior Field Operations Manual, the chapter on Disclosure, will be added at a later date. This Instruction constitutes OSHA's general enforcement policies and procedures manual for use by the field offices in conducting inspections, issuing citations and proposing penalties.

## **Significant Changes**

- Cancels and replaces the Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM).
- Cancels sections D. and E. of Chapter VI of the prior Field Operations Manual.
- Cancels Chapter XII of the prior Field Operations Manual.
- Will consist of the following chapters:

Chapter 1. Introduction

Chapter 2. Program Planning

Chapter 3. Inspection Procedures

Chapter 4. Violations

Chapter 5. Case File Preparations and Documentation

Chapter 6. Penalties and Debt Collection

Chapter 7. Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification

Chapter 8. Settlements

Chapter 9. Complaint and Referral Processing

Chapter 10. Industry Sectors

I. Agriculture

II. Construction [Reserved]

III. Maritime [Reserved]

Chapter 11. Imminent Danger, Fatality, Catastrophe and Emergency Response

Chapter 12. Specialized Inspection Procedures

- I. Multi-Employer Workplace/site Policy [Reserved]
- II. Temporary Labor Camps

Chapter 13. Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs [Reserved]

Chapter 14. Health Inspection Enforcement Policy [Reserved]

Chapter 15. Legal Issues

Chapter 16. Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)  
[Reserved]

## **Disclaimer**

**This manual is intended to provide instruction regarding some of the internal operations of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and is solely for the benefit of the Government. No duties, rights, or benefits, substantive or procedural, are created or implied by this manual. The contents of this manual are not enforceable by any person or entity against the Department of Labor or the United States. Statements which reflect current Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission or court precedents do not necessarily indicate acquiescence with those precedents.**

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**(FOIA)**

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\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

NOTICE: This is an OSHA ARCHIVE document, and may no longer represent OSHA policy.

\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

This document is presented here as historical content, for research and review purposes only.



# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

### I. Purpose.

This Instruction implements the Field Operations Manual (FOM), and replaces OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-103, Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM), issued September 26, 1994. This Instruction also replaces two of the three remaining parts of the prior Field Operations Manual (CPL 02-00-045) that are still in effect. The one remaining part, the chapter on Disclosure, will be added at a later date. This FOM is a revision of OSHA's enforcement policies and procedures as stated in the FIRM, which provides the field offices a reference document for identifying the responsibilities associated with the majority of their inspection duties.

### II. Scope.

This Instruction applies OSHA-wide.

### III. References.

- A. [Title 5 United States Code 504](#), The Equal Access to Justice Act.
- B. [Title 18 United States Code 601](#), Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.
- C. [Title 18 United States Code 1905](#), Disclosure of Confidential Information.
- D. [Title 28 United States Code 2412](#), Rules Implementing the Equal Access to Justice Act; Costs and Fees.
- E. [Title 29 United States Code 651](#), Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970.
- F. [Title 29 United States Code 1802](#), Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act.
- G. [Title 31 United States Code 3717](#), Debt Collection Improvement Act.
- H. [Title 39 United States Code 101](#), The Postal Employee Safety Enhancement Act of 1998.
- I. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 2.21](#) and [2.22](#), Employees Served with Subpoenas.

- J. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 20](#), Federal Claims Collection.
- K. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 500.132](#), Applicable Federal Standards: ETA and OSHA Housing Standards.
- L. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 654](#), Social Responsibilities of the Employment Service System.
- M. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 1903.6](#), Advance Notice of Inspections.
- N. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 1903.14](#), Policy Regarding Employee Rescue Activities.
- O. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 1903.19](#), Abatement Verification.
- P. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 1904.39](#), Reporting Fatalities and Multiple Hospitalizations to OSHA.
- Q. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1908](#), Consultation Agreements.
- R. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1910](#), Occupational Safety and Health Standards.
- S. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1915](#), Occupational Safety and Health for Shipyard Employment.
- T. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1926](#), Safety and Health Regulations for Construction.
- U. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1928](#), Occupational Safety and Health Standards for Agriculture.
- V. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1960](#), Basic Program Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs.
- W. [29 Code of Federal Regulations 1975.4\(b\)\(2\)](#), Coverage – Agricultural Employers.
- X. [29 Code of Federal Regulations Part 2200](#), Rules of Procedure.
- Y. [40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 170](#), Worker Protection Standard.
- Z. Housing for Agricultural Workers: Final Rule, *Federal Register*, March 4, 1980 (45 FR 14180).

- AA. Incorporation of General Industry Safety and Health Standards Applicable to Construction Work, *Federal Register*, August 12, 1996 ([61 FR 41738](#)).
- BB. Delegation of Authorities and Assignment of Responsibilities to the Assistant Secretary for Employment Standards and Other Officials in the Employment Standards Administration, *Federal Register*, January 2, 1997 ([62 FR 107](#)).
- CC. Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines; Issuance of Voluntary Guidelines, *Federal Register*, January 16, 1989 ([54 FR 3904](#)).
- DD. Final Rule on State Plans Coverage of the U.S. Postal Service (*Federal Register*, June 9, 2000 ([65 FR 36618](#))).
- EE. Final Policy Concerning the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Treatment of Voluntary Employer Safety and Health Self-Audits, *Federal Register*, July 28, 2000 ([65 FR 46498](#)).
- FF. Secretary's Order 5-2002; Delegation of Authority and Assignment of Responsibility to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, *Federal Register*, October 22, 2002 ([67 FR 65007](#)).
- GG. OSHA Instruction [ADM 01-00-003](#), Redlegation of Authority and Responsibility of the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, March 6, 2003.
- HH. OSHA Instruction [ADM 03-01-005](#), OSHA Compliance Records, August 3, 1998.
- II. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-025](#), Scheduling System for Programmed Inspections, January 4, 1995.
- JJ. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-028](#), Compliance Assistance the Powered Industrial Truck Operator Training Standards, November 30, 2000.
- KK. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-051](#), Enforcement and Limitations under the Appropriations Act, May 28, 1998.
- LL. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-080](#), Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties, October 21, 1990.
- MM. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-090](#), Guidelines for Administration of Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreements, June 3, 1991.
- NN. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-094](#), OSHA Response to Significant Events of Potentially Catastrophic Consequences, July 22, 1991.

- OO. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-098](#), Guidelines for Case File Documentation for use with Videotapes and Audiotapes, October 12, 1993.
- PP. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-111](#), Citation Policy for Paperwork and Written Program Requirement Violations, November 27, 1995.
- QQ. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-120](#), Inspection procedures for the Respiratory Protection Standard, September 25, 1998.
- RR. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-121](#), Providing Assistance to Smaller Employers, March 12, 1998.
- SS. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-122](#), Enforcement Guidance for the U.S. Postal Service, April 16, 1999.
- TT. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-124](#), Multi-Employer Citation Policy, December 10, 1999.
- UU. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-125](#), Home-Based Worksites, February 25, 2000.
- VV. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-135](#), Recordkeeping Policies and Procedures Manual (RKM), December 30, 2004.
- WW. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-136](#), OSHA's National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Shipbreaking, March 16, 2005.
- XX. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-139](#), Longshoring and Marine Terminals "Tool Shed" Directive, May 23, 2006.
- YY. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-141](#), Inspection Scheduling for Construction, July 14, 2006.
- ZZ. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-142](#), Shipyard Employment "Tool Bag" Directive, August 3, 2006.
- AAA. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-145](#), Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP), January 1, 2008.
- BBB. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-035](#), 29 CFR 1910.95(b)(1), Guidelines for Noise Enforcement; Appendix A, December 19, 1983.
- CCC. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-038](#), Inspection Procedures for the Hazard Communication Standard, March 20, 1998.

- DDD. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-043](#), Chemical Information Manual, July 1, 1991.
- EEE. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-054](#), Respiratory Protection Program Guidelines, July 14, 2000.
- FFF. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-072](#), Rules of Agency Practice and Procedure Concerning OSHA Access to Employee Medical Records, August 22, 2007.
- GGG. OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-02-073](#), Inspection Procedures for 29 CFR 1910.120 and 1926.65, Paragraph (q): Emergency Response to Hazardous Substance Releases, August 27, 2007.
- HHH. OSHA Instruction [CPL 03-00-004](#), Petroleum Refinery Process Safety Management National Emphasis Program, June 7, 2007.
- III. OSHA Instruction [CPL 04-00-001](#), Procedures for Approval of Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs), November 10, 1999.
- JJJ. OSHA Instruction [CSP 01-00-002](#), State Plan Policies and Procedures Manual, March 21, 2001.
- KKK. OSHA Instruction [CSP 02-00-002](#), Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, January 18, 2008.
- LLL. OSHA Instruction [CSP 03-01-003](#), Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) Policies and Procedures Manual, April 18, 2008.
- MMM. OSHA Instruction [CSP 03-02-002](#), OSHA Strategic Partnership Program for Worker Safety and Health, February 10, 2005.
- NNN. OSHA Instruction [CSP 04-01-001](#), OSHA Alliance Program, June 10, 2004.
- OOO. OSHA Instruction [FAP 01-00-003](#), Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs, May 17, 1996.
- PPP. OSHA Instruction [HSO 01-00-001](#), National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP), dated December 18, 2003.
- QQQ. OSHA Instruction IRT 01-00-007, The IMIS Enforcement Data Processing Manual for Use with the NCR Computer System, dated September 20, 1993.

- RRR. OSHA Instruction [TED 01-00-015](#), *OSHA Technical Manual*, January 20, 1999.
- SSS. Memoranda dated September 12 and 13, 2000 to the Regional Administrators from H. Berrien Zettler, Deputy Director, Directorate of Construction (via email) regarding transmittal of information on construction fatalities to the University of Tennessee.
- TTT. Memoranda dated May 14, 2003 and February 18, 2004 to the Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne regarding transmittal of information on construction fatalities to the University of Tennessee.
- UUU. [Memorandum](#) dated December 16, 2003, to the Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne regarding IMMLANG Procedures (available on the OSHA Intranet).
- VVV. [Memorandum](#) dated March 24, 2004 to Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne regarding Procedures for Significant Enforcement Cases (available on the OSHA Intranet).
- WWW. *Frank Diehl Farms v. Secretary of Labor*, 696 F.2d 1325 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1983).
- XXX. *Int. Union UAW v. General Dynamics Land Systems Division*, 815 F.2d 1570 (D.D. Cir. 1987).
- YYY. *Marion Stevens dba Chapman & Stephens Company*, [5 BNA OSHC 1395](#) (No.13535, 1977).
- ZZZ. *Darragh Company*, [9 BNA OSHC 1205](#), (Nos. 77-2555, 77-3074, and 77-3075, 1980).
- AAAA. *J. C. Watson Company*, [22 BNA OSHC 1235](#) (Nos. 05-0175 and 05-0176, 2008).

#### **IV. Cancellations.**

- A. OSHA Instruction ADM 01-00-002, Administrative Subpoenas, August 19, 1991.
- B. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-045, Field Operations Manual, Chapter VI, Sections D. Handling Monies Received from Employers, and E. Debt Collection Procedures, March 3, 1995.

- C. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-045, Field Operations Manual, Chapter XI, Migrant Labor Camps, March 3, 1995.
  - D. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-103, Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM), September 26, 1994.
  - E. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-112, National Quick-Fix Program, August 2, 1996.
  - F. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-114 Abatement Verification Regulation Enforcement Policies and Procedures, May 28, 1998.
  - G. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-137, Fatality/Catastrophe Investigation Procedures, April 14, 2005.
  - H. OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-140, Complaint Policies and Procedures, June 23, 2006.
  - I. Memorandum dated March 23, 1995, to the Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary James W. Stanley regarding FIRM Change: Minimum Serious Willful Penalty.
  - J. Memorandum dated June 21, 1996 to the Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary Michael G. Connors regarding FIRM Change: Mandatory Collection of OSHA-200 and Lost Workday Injury and Illness (LWDII) Data During Inspections.
  - K. Memorandum dated July 13, 1999 to the Regional Administrators from Assistant Secretary Charles N. Jeffress regarding Child Labor: Probability Assessment and Good Faith Penalty Adjustment Considerations.
- V. Action Information.**
- A. **Responsible Office.**  
Directorate of Enforcement Programs (DEP).
  - B. **Action Offices.**  
National, Regional, and Area Offices.
  - C. **Information Offices.**  
State Plan States, OSHA Training Institute, Consultation Project Managers, VPP Managers and Coordinators, OSHA Strategic Partnership

Coordinators, Compliance Assistance Coordinators, Compliance Assistance Specialists, and Regional EEP Coordinators.

## **VI. State Impact.**

- A. Notice of Intent, Adoption, and Submission of a Plan Change Supplement are required.
- B. This instruction describes a Federal Program Change which consolidates and updates OSHA's field enforcement policies and procedures. States must have, as a part of their State plan, formal written policies and procedures on all aspects of their compliance program, including inspections, targeting, citations, penalties, and post citation processes, which are at least as effective as the procedures in this revised Field Operations Manual (FOM). In adopting equivalent policies and procedures States must address each chapter and/or policy area in this manual. Significant changes to this manual are listed in section VII of this chapter.

States need not adopt the internal OSHA administrative procedures set out in this manual, such as those relating to organizational structure and such matters as penalty collection, but must include documentation of their own comparable internal administrative procedures and processes. These will necessarily differ from those of Federal OSHA.

- C. States must notify OSHA within 60 days whether their enforcement policies will be identical to or different from those in this Instruction. State policies and procedures must be adopted within 6 months of issuance of this Instruction. Each State must both submit a copy of its revised Field Operations Manual as a plan change supplement to OSHA, preferably in electronic format, with a comparison document clearly identifying any differences from the revised FOM, within 60 days of adoption, and either post its equivalent State Field Operations Manual on its State plan website and provide the link to OSHA or provide OSHA with information on how the public may obtain a copy. OSHA will post information on the State responses to this Instruction on its website.

## **VII. Significant Changes.**

- A. **Chapter 2. Program Planning.**
  - 1. The title of this chapter has been changed from Pre-Inspection Procedures to Program Planning.
  - 2. Section II: Area Office responsibilities have been expanded.



3. Section III: A section has been added to cover OSHA Cooperative Programs Overview.
4. Specific information regarding Complaints and Referrals has been removed from this chapter.
5. Specific information regarding Inspection Preparation has been removed from this chapter.
6. Paragraph IV.D.: A section has been added to address Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations.
7. Paragraph IV.E.: A section has been added to address Preemption by Another Federal Agency.
8. Paragraph IV.F.: A section has been added to address enforcement activity at the United States Postal Service.
9. Paragraph IV.G.: A section has been added to address Home-Based Worksites.
10. Section VI.H.4.a.: A note has been added defining “other critical inspections as determined by the Assistant Secretary” to include referrals, although not limit only to referrals.

**B. Chapter 3. Inspection Procedures.**

1. This replaces the majority of Chapter II of the FIRM, Inspection Procedures.
2. Paragraph II.A.1.: Inspection planning requires an establishment search using the IMIS database.
3. Paragraph II.A.2.: State plan citation history **may** be used to document employer knowledge to support a willful violation, and to determine eligibility for the history penalty reduction factor. It **may not** be used to support a repeat violation.
4. Paragraph II.D.: Expanded guidance is provided on compliance officer safety and health.
5. Paragraph III.A.: The definition of a comprehensive inspection is revised to “a substantially complete and thorough inspection of all potentially hazardous areas of the establishment.”

6. Paragraph IV.H.: The strike or labor dispute section has been revised to emphasize that CSHOs must make every effort to ensure that their actions are not interpreted as supporting either side.
7. Paragraph V.A.: The CSHO is required to review any written hazard assessment that the employer has made in compliance with §1910.132(d) to determine appropriate personal protective equipment.
8. Paragraph V.D.: Expanded guidance is provided on review of voluntary compliance programs, including on-site consultation, SHARP, and VPP.
9. Paragraph VI.A.: Revised guidance is provided on collection of employer injury and illness data and calculation of the DART rate.
10. Paragraph VIII.B.2.: Extensive guidance is provided on interviews of non-managerial employees.

**C. Chapter 4. Violations.**

1. This chapter replaces section C, Violations, of Chapter III of the FIRM.
2. Paragraphs I.A.3. and 4: The definition and application of horizontal and vertical standards have been revised and clarified.
3. Paragraph II.C.: The discussion of the four factors involved in determining a serious violation has been expanded and clarified, with examples.
4. Section III: The elements of a general duty clause violation are given an expanded discussion, with examples.
5. Paragraph III.D.: Additional clarification is provided on limitations of use of the general duty clause, with examples.
6. Section V: Expanded and clarified guidance is provided on willful violations, with examples.
7. Section VI: Updated guidance is provided for criminal/willful violations.
8. Paragraph VII.A.2.: Violations cited by State Plan States cannot be used as a basis of OSHA repeat violations by Federal OSHA, even if the same standards are cited by a State agency. Only

violations that have become a final order of the Review Commission are to be considered.

9. Paragraph VII.E.1.: Clarification is provided on time limitations for citing repeat violations.
10. Paragraph VII.G.: Responsibilities of the Area Director in citing repeat violations are clarified.
11. Section VIII: *De minimis violations* are corrected to *de minimis conditions*.
12. Paragraph X.C.: Clarifies when not to group or combine violations.
13. Sections XI., XII., XIII., and XIV: Guidance on citing health standard violations has been updated.

**D. Chapter 5. Case File Preparation and Documentation.**

1. This chapter replaces section A., Four Stage Case File Documentation, and section B., Specific Forms, of Chapter III, and section C., Citations, of Chapter IV of the FIRM.
2. Paragraph X.A.: Expanded guidance is provided on Inspection Case File Activity Diary Sheet.
3. Paragraph XI: Clarification is provided on Statute of Limitation for issuance of citations.
4. Paragraph XII.C.: Expanded guidance is provided on Classified and Trade Secret Information.

**E. Chapter 6. Penalties and Debt Collection.**

1. This chapter replaces Section C. of Chapter IV of the FIRM.
2. Paragraph III.B.2.c.: A provision requiring documentation in the case file if the Area Director approves a partial reduction for *Size* for small employers (1-25 employees) is added.
3. Paragraph III.B.3.d.: A provision allowing some OSHA Strategic Partnership (OSP) sites to qualify for an extra 10% *Good Faith* reduction is added.

4. Paragraph III.B.4.a.: A provision clarifying that the *History* reduction factor is to be applied nationwide, and to include State Plan state history as well, is added.
5. Paragraphs III.B.4.c. second bullet and X.C.2.c.: A *History* reduction will no longer be given to employers being cited for failure to certify abatement.
6. Paragraph IV.C.1. and Table 6-5: The Quick-Fix policy has been modified to allow it to apply to medium gravity serious violations.
7. Paragraph VI.B.: A note has been added to clarify that the second *Size* chart applies only to serious willful violations.
8. Paragraph VI.C.2.: The reduction factor for *History* is allowed for penalties for regulatory violations that are classified as willful; this is in addition to the reduction factor for *Size* that has been allowed.
9. Paragraph X.C.2.c. and 3.b.: A change has been made to abatement verification policy to not allow a *History* reduction to employers being cited for failure to certify abatement or for failure to notify employees and tagging movable equipment.
10. Paragraph X.D.2.: A clarification has been added to the Part 1904 provision that the Repeated and Willful penalty policies of paragraphs V.D. and VI.C., respectively, are applicable to recordkeeping violations.
11. Section XIII replaces section D of Chapter VI of the prior Field Operations Manual (FOM), CPL 02-00-045, regarding Handling Monies Received from Employers.
12. Section XIV replaces section E. of Chapter VI of the prior Field Operations Manual (FOM), CPL 02-00-045, regarding Debt Collection Procedures.
13. All references to the Office of Management Data Systems (OMDS) have been replaced with the Debt Collection Accountability Team (DCAT).
14. Paragraph XIII.B.3.: Adjustment to Payments – If a check is unsigned it should be forwarded to the lockbox instead of being returned to the employer.

15. Paragraph XIII.B.4.a., fourth bullet: If a payment instrument is dated more than six months prior to the current date, it should be returned to the employer via a certified delivery service.
16. Paragraph XIII.C.: Returning Penalty Payments – Refund requests should go to DCAT instead of the Office of Financial Management.
17. Paragraph XIV.C.: Notification Procedures – Referencing the “Notice” as the first demand letter has been removed. All subsequent references to second or third demand letters have also been removed.
18. Paragraph XIV.D.: Notification of Overdue Debt – Demand letters do not have to be mailed via certified mail. They may be mailed using regular mail. Also, demand letters may be faxed if it is verified that the company received the fax.
19. Paragraph XIV.D.2.: Contested Case with Penalties – Instead of sending a demand letter with late fees to the employer, the Area Director may send a letter, without assessing late fees, which notifies the employer that the debt is now past due. This “notification” letter is a substitute for the demand letter requirement and allows the Area Director some leeway in contested cases with special circumstances, i.e. not receiving or acting on the Final Order Document in a timely manner.
20. Paragraph XIV.F.6.: If the Area Office receives a check for a case that was referred to DCAT, the check should not be forwarded to the National Office. Instead, DCAT should be notified immediately so proper action can be determined.
21. Paragraph XIV.H.: Uncollectible Penalties – A provision is added for dealing with debts that the Area Office may deem as uncollectible.
22. Paragraph XIV.I.: National Office Debt Collection Procedures are updated to reflect the current procedures and processes for referring uncollected debts to the Department of Treasury.
23. Paragraph XIV.I.5.: Compromise of Debts over \$100,000 – Instead of the Solicitor, DCAT will obtain Department of Treasury or Justice approval for waiving these debts.
24. Paragraph XIV.I.6.: Return to the Area Office – The requirement that the Area Director forward cases to the RSOL for legal action

to collect debts returned by DCAT as uncollectible has been removed.

F. **Chapter 7. Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification.**

1. Paragraph I.A.: Procedures for accepting and handling electronic (e-mail) notices of contest are provided.
2. Section II: Provides policies and procedures for informal conferences; policies and procedures for settlement of cases is in Chapter 8.
3. Paragraph II.B.: Provides guidance on the attendance of the employer's attorney at the informal conference.
4. Paragraph II.F.2.b.: Specifically prohibits any discussion of possible criminal referrals in fatality cases during the informal conference.
5. Section III: Provides updated policies and procedures on Petitions for Modification of Abatement Date.
6. Sections IV through XVI: Replace the current directive on abatement verification, OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-114, Abatement Verification Regulation Enforcement Policies and Procedures, May 28, 1998.
7. Paragraph IV.A.: Provides an expanded definitions section, including definitions of the terms *Abatement* and *Abatement Dates*.
8. Sections V through VIII: Provide expanded guidance on citations for violations of §1903.19.
9. Paragraph XI.C. and paragraph XII: Provide policy on follow-up inspections for employer failure to verify abatement under §1903.19, including follow-up inspections under the Enhanced Enforcement Program.

G. **Chapter 8. Settlements.**

This chapter incorporates the Settlement policies and procedures that currently exist in the FIRM as updated, except that Section 17 settlements will be handled in accordance with established agency procedures, including approval by the National Office.

H. **Chapter 9. Complaint and Referral Processing.**

1. This incorporates and replaces the current directive on this subject, OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-140, Complaint Policies and Procedures, June 23, 2006.
2. Paragraph I.A.1.: The definition of *complaint* has been clarified to include only present employees, not past employees.
3. Paragraph I.A.2.a.: The potential harm necessary to file a complaint has been clarified to include health harm as well as physical harm.
4. Paragraph I.A.8.: The OSHA-90 form has been identified as the proper form in which to use the coding identified under the referral sources.
5. Paragraph I.F.2.b.: This paragraph explicitly states that information received via telephone from a current employee or representative of employees is considered a non-formal complaint until a signed copy of the information is received.

I. **Chapter 10. Industry Sectors.**

1. **Agriculture.**
  - a. OSHA's main policies and procedures in the agriculture industry are gathered together for the first time.
  - b. Paragraph I.E: Coverage of pesticides by OSHA and EPA are addressed, including use of the Hazard Communication standard.
  - c. Paragraph I.F: OSHA's shared authority with the Wage and Hour Division of ESA is discussed.
2. **Construction.**

[Reserved]
3. **Maritime.**

[Reserved]

J. **Chapter 11. Imminent Danger, Fatality, Catastrophe and Emergency Response.**

1. This chapter incorporates and replaces OSHA Instruction CPL 02-00-137, Fatality/Catastrophe Investigation Procedures, April 14, 2005.
2. Section III. A section on rescue operations and emergency response has been added.

K. **Chapter 12. Specialized Inspection Procedures.**

1. **Multi-Employer Workplace/site Policy.**

[Reserved]

2. **Temporary Labor Camps.**

- a. This section cancels Chapter XI of OSHA Instruction CPL 2.45B, Field Operations Manual (the old FOM). Chapter XI was not cancelled by CPL 02-00-103, Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM), when it was issued September 26, 1994.
- b. Paragraph II.A.: A provision has been added to clarify that OSHA's §1910.142 Temporary Labor Camp standards apply to non-agriculture workplaces as well as to agriculture workplaces.
- c. Paragraph II.C.: A section has been added describing the shared responsibility between OSHA and the Wage and Hour Division.
- d. Paragraph II.E.: A provision has been added that discusses when other Part 1910 standards may be cited for hazards that are not covered by §1910.142 for non-agriculture housing.

L. **Chapter 13. Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs.**

[Reserved]

M. **Chapter 14. Health Inspection Enforcement Policy.**

[Reserved]



N. **Chapter 15. Legal Issues.**

1. Section IV: Equal Access to Justice Act explains the application of this Act to OSHA enforcement proceedings.
2. Section XII: Commission Simplified Proceedings gives an explanation of the OSHRC's simplified proceedings and some of its rules.
3. Section XIV: Federal Court Enforcement under Section 11(b) of the Act adds enforcement instruction regarding Federal summary enforcement orders previously stated in the Enhanced Enforcement Program directive.

O. **Chapter 16. Disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).**

[Reserved]

**VIII. Background.**

The Field Inspection Reference Manual (FIRM) was issued September 26, 1994 and replaced most of the previous Field Operations Manual (FOM). Since that time, the FIRM has never revised, but has been supplemented and modified by numerous additional directives, memorandums, and interpretations.

This Instruction, the OSHA Field Operations Manual, incorporates and replaces the FIRM and many of the subsequent directives and memoranda, and provides a single, updated source of instruction on general OSHA enforcement policies and procedures.

The FOM is designed to be updated on a regular basis by amending chapters or sections thereof to embody modifications and clarifications to OSHA's general enforcement policies and procedures.

**IX. Definitions and Terminology.**

A. **The Act.**

This term refers to the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 United States Code 651).

B. **Compliance Safety and Health Officer (CSHO).**

This term refers to Safety Engineers, Safety Compliance Officers, and Industrial Hygienists.

C. **He/She and His/Hers.**

The terms *he* and *she*, as well as *his* or *her*, when used throughout this manual, are interchangeable. That is, male(s) applies to female(s), and vice versa.

D. **Professional Judgment.**

All OSHA employees are expected to exercise their best judgment as safety and health professionals and as representatives of the United States Department of Labor in every aspect of carrying out their duties.

E. **Workplace and Worksite.**

The terms *workplace* and *worksite* are interchangeable. *Workplace* is used more frequently in general industry, while *worksite* is more commonly used in the construction industry.

## Chapter 2

### PROGRAM PLANNING

#### I. Introduction.

OSHA's mission is to assure the safety and health of America's working men and women by promulgating and enforcing standards and regulations; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health as well as the development of comprehensive safety and health management systems. Effective and efficient use of resources requires careful, flexible planning. In this way, the overall goal of hazard abatement and employee protection is best served.

#### II. Area Office Responsibilities.

##### A. Providing Assistance to Small Employers.

1. In 1996, the Congress passed the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act ([SBREFA](#)) to respond to the concern expressed by the small business community that Federal regulations were too numerous and complex, and that small business needed special assistance in understanding and complying with those regulations.
2. All Federal agencies regulating small businesses are required to have in place programs to provide guidance and compliance assistance. These programs must contain procedures to answer inquiries by small entities (small businesses). These programs also provide information on and advice about compliance with the statutes and regulations; interpretations; and applications of the law to specific sets of facts supplied by the small entity.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-121](#), Providing Assistance to Smaller Employers, dated March 12, 1998.*

##### B. Area Office Outreach Program.

The Area Director or designee will ensure that the Area Office maintains an outreach program appropriate to local conditions and the needs of the service area. The plan may include Regional and National Office support services, compliance assistance services including assistance in developing compliance safety and health management systems, training and education services, referral services, cooperative programs, abatement assistance, and technical services.

C. **Responding to Requests for Assistance.**

All requests from employers or employees for compliance information or assistance shall receive timely, accurate, and helpful responses from OSHA. See the section on [Information Requests](#) in this chapter for additional information.

III. **OSHA Cooperative Programs Overview.**

OSHA offers a number of avenues for businesses and organizations to work cooperatively with the Agency. Compliance Officers should discuss the various cooperative programs with employers.

A. **Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).**

The Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) is designed to recognize and promote effective safety and health management. A hallmark of VPP is the principle that management, labor, and OSHA can work together in pursuit of a safe and healthy workplace. A VPP participant is an employer that has successfully designed and implemented a health and safety management system at its worksite.

*NOTE: See [CSP 03-01-003](#), Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP): Policies and Procedures Manual, dated March 25, 2003, for additional information.*

B. **Onsite Consultation Program.**

1. OSHA onsite consultation programs are available in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands under [Section 21\(d\)](#) and [23\(g\)](#) agreements with Federal OSHA or under State plans approved by OSHA.
  - a. The State Onsite Consultation Program offers a variety of services at no cost to employers. These services include assisting in the development and implementation of an effective safety and health management system, and offering training and education to the employer and employees at the worksite. Smaller businesses in high hazard industries or those involved in hazardous operations receive priority.
  - b. The State Onsite Consultation Program is separate from OSHA's enforcement efforts. Under onsite consultation programs, no citations are issued, nor are penalties proposed.

2. **Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).**

- a. Another program that recognizes employers' efforts to create a safe workplace and exempts them from inspection is the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). This program is administered by the State Onsite Consultation Program but is funded under [Section 21\(d\)](#) of the Act.
- b. SHARP is designed to provide incentives and support those employers that implement and continuously improve effective safety and health management system(s) at their worksite. SHARP participants are exempted from OSHA programmed inspections.

*NOTE: See [CSP 02-00-001](#), Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, dated August 6, 2001, for additional information.*

C. **Strategic Partnerships**

Organizations can enter into Strategic Partnerships with OSHA to address specific safety and health issues. In these partnerships, OSHA enters into extended, voluntary, cooperative relationships with groups of employers, employees, and employee representatives (sometimes including other stakeholders, and sometimes involving only one employer) in order to encourage, assist, and recognize efforts to eliminate serious hazards and to achieve a high level of employee safety and health.

*NOTE: See [CSP 03-02-002](#), OSHA Strategic Partnership Program for Worker Safety and Health, dated February 10, 2005, for additional information.*

D. **Alliance Program.**

Through the Alliance Program, OSHA works with groups committed to safety and health, including businesses, trade or professional organizations, unions and educational institutions, to leverage resources and expertise to develop compliance assistance tools and resources and share information with employers and employees to help prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the workplace. OSHA and the organization sign a formal agreement with goals that address training and education, outreach and communication, and promote the national dialogue on workplace safety and health.

*NOTE: See [CSP 04-01-001](#), OSHA Alliance Program, dated June 10, 2004, for additional information.*

*NOTE: See [Section VI.H.](#) of this chapter, Enforcement Scheduling and Interface with Cooperative Program Participants, for additional information.*

#### **IV. Enforcement Program Scheduling.**

##### **A. General.**

1. OSHA's priority system for conducting inspections is designed to allocate available OSHA resources as effectively as possible to ensure that maximum feasible protection is provided to working men and women. The Area Director or designee will ensure that inspections are scheduled within the framework of this chapter, that they are consistent with the objectives of the Agency, and that appropriate documentation of scheduling practices is maintained.
2. The Area Director or designee will also ensure that OSHA resources are effectively distributed during inspection activities. If an inspection is of a complex nature, the Area Director or designee may consider utilizing additional OSHA resources (e.g., the Health Response Team). In other circumstances, the use of outside resources may aid the Area or District Office to deploy available resources more effectively. The Area Office will retain control of the inspection.

##### **B. Inspection Priority Criteria.**

Generally, priority of accomplishment and of assigning staff resources for inspection categories is as shown in Table 2-1 below:

**Table 2-1: Inspection Priorities**

Priority	Category
First	Imminent Danger
Second	Fatality/Catastrophe
Third	Complaints/Referrals
Fourth	Programmed Inspections

##### **1. Efficient Use of Resources.**

Deviations from this priority list are allowed so long as they are justifiable, lead to the efficient use of resources, and promote effective employee protection. An example of such a deviation would be when the Agency, Regional Administrator or an Area

Director commits a certain percentage of resources to programmed Special Emphasis Program (SEP) inspections such as a National Emphasis Program (NEP), a Local Emphasis Program (LEP), or Regional Emphasis Program (REP). Inspection scheduling deviations must be documented in the case file.

2. **Follow-up Inspections.**

In cases where follow-up inspections are necessary, they shall be conducted as promptly as resources permit. In general, follow-up inspections shall take priority over all programmed inspections and any unprogrammed inspection in which the hazards are anticipated to be other-than-serious.

*NOTE: See [Chapter 7](#), Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification, for additional information.*

3. **Monitoring Inspections.**

When a monitoring inspection is necessary, the priority is the same as for a follow-up inspection.

*NOTE: See [Chapter 7](#), Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification, for additional information.*

4. **Employer Information Requests.**

Contacts for technical information initiated by employers or their representatives will not trigger an inspection, nor will such employer inquiries protect the requesting employer against inspections conducted pursuant to existing policy, scheduling guidelines and inspection programs established by the Agency.

5. **Reporting of Imminent Danger, Catastrophe, Fatality, Amputations, Accidents, Referrals or Complaints.**

The Area Director or designee will act in accordance with established inspection priority procedures.

*NOTE: See [Section V](#), of this chapter, Unprogrammed Activity – Hazard Evaluation and Inspection Scheduling, for additional information.*

C. **Effect of Contest.**

If an employer has contested a citation and/or a penalty from a previous inspection at a specific worksite, and the case is still pending before the

Review Commission, the following guidelines apply to additional inspections of the employer at that worksite:

1. If the employer has contested the penalty only, the inspection will be scheduled as if there were no contest;
2. If the employer has contested the citation itself or any items therein, then programmed and unprogrammed inspections will be scheduled, but all under contest will be excluded from the inspection unless a potential imminent danger is involved.

*NOTE: See [Paragraph IV.B.](#), Inspection Priority Criteria, of this chapter for additional information.*

**D. Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations.**

1. In providing funding for OSHA, Congress has consistently placed restrictions on enforcement activities for two categories of employers: small farming operations and small employers in low-hazard industries. Congress may place exemptions and limitations on OSHA activities through the annual Appropriations Act.
2. Before initiating an inspection of an employer in these categories the Area Office will evaluate whether the Appropriations Act for the fiscal year would prohibit the inspection. Where this determination cannot be made beforehand, the CSHO will determine the status of the small farming operation or a small employer in a low-hazard industry upon arrival at the workplace. If the prohibition applies, the inspection shall immediately be discontinued.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-051](#), Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriation Act, dated May 28, 1998, for additional information.*

**E. Preemption by Another Federal Agency.**

1. [Section 4\(b\)\(1\)](#) of the Act states that the Act does not apply to working conditions over which other federal agencies exercise statutory responsibility to prescribe standards for safety and health. The determination of preemption by another Federal agency is, in many cases, a highly complex matter.
2. If a question arises, usually upon receipt of a complaint, referral, or other inquiry, consult the list of [Memorandums of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) on the OSHA website to determine if the issue has been



previously addressed. A MOU is an agreement created to address/resolve coverage issues and to improve the working relationships between other Federal agencies and organizations regarding employee safety and health.

3. At times, an inspection may have already begun when the coverage jurisdiction question arises. Any such situation will be brought to the attention of the Area Director or designee as soon as they arise, and dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
4. Two examples of MOUs include the following:
  - a. [Mine Safety and Health Administration](#) - Interagency Agreement between the Mine Safety and Health Administration and OSHA, dated March 29, 1979.
  - b. [United States Coast Guard/U.S. Department of Transportation](#) - Authority of Coast Guard and OSHA regarding enforcement of safety and health standards aboard vessels inspected and certified by the Coast Guard, dated March 4, 1983.

**F. United States Postal Service.**

1. [The Postal Employee Safety Enhancement Act of 1998](#) applies the Act to the U.S. Postal Service in the same manner as the Act applies to a private sector employer.
2. All State Plan States elected not to cover the U.S. Postal Service. Thus, Federal OSHA retains authority to cover the U.S. Postal Service nationwide. Federal coverage in State Plan States encompasses U.S. Postal Service employees and contract employees engaged in U.S. Postal Service mail operations. Coverage includes contractor-operated facilities engaged in mail operations and postal stations in public or commercial facilities. State Plan States continue to exercise jurisdiction over all other private sector contractors working on U.S. Postal Service sites who are not engaged in U.S. Postal Service mail operations, such as building maintenance and construction employees. See the Final Rule on State Plans Coverage of the U.S. Postal Service (*Federal Register*, June 9, 2000 ([65 FR 36618](#)))
3. Violations documented during inspections initiated at a U.S. Postal Service site will be cited with penalties in accordance with the FOM and other applicable OSHA policies for the private sector.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-122](#), Enforcement Guidance for the U.S. Postal Service, dated April 16, 1999, for additional information.*

**G. Home-Based Worksites.**

1. The agency will not perform any inspections of employees' home offices. A home office is defined as office work activities in a home-based setting/worksites (e.g., filing, keyboarding, computer research, reading, writing) and may include the use of office equipment (e.g., telephone, facsimile machine, computer, scanner, copy machine, desk, file cabinet).
2. OSHA will only conduct inspections of other home-based worksites, such as home manufacturing operations, when it receives a complaint or referral alleging that a violation of a safety or health standard exists that threatens physical harm, that an imminent danger is present, or that there was a work-related fatality.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-125](#), Home-Based Worksites, dated February 25, 2000, for additional information.*

**H. Inspection/Investigation Types.**

1. **Unprogrammed.**
  - a. Inspections scheduled in response to alleged hazardous working conditions identified at a specific worksite are classified as unprogrammed. This type of inspection responds to:
    - Imminent Dangers;
    - Fatalities/catastrophes;
    - Complaints; and
    - Referrals.
  - b. It also includes follow-up and monitoring inspections scheduled by the Area Office.

*NOTE: This category includes all employers/employees directly affected by the subject of the unprogrammed inspection activity, and is especially applicable on multi-employer worksites.*

*NOTE: Not all complaints and referrals qualify for an inspection. See [Chapter 9](#), Complaint and Referral Processing, for additional information.*

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-124](#), Multi-Employer Worksite Citation Policy, dated December 10, 1999, for additional information.*

2. **Unprogrammed Related.**

- a. Inspections of employers at multi-employer worksites whose operations are not directly addressed by the subject of the conditions identified in a complaint, accident, or referral are designated as unprogrammed related.
- b. An example would be: A trenching inspection conducted at the unprogrammed worksite where the trenching hazard was not identified in the complaint, accident report, or referral.

3. **Programmed.**

Inspections of worksites which have been scheduled based upon objective or neutral selection criteria are programmed inspections, such as the Site Specific Targeting (SST) Program. The worksites are selected according to national scheduling plans for safety and for health or under local, regional, and national special emphasis programs.

4. **Program Related.**

Inspections of employers at multi-employer worksites whose activities were not included in the programmed assignment, such as a low injury rate employer at a worksite where programmed inspections are being conducted for all high rate employers.

V. **Unprogrammed Activity – Hazard Evaluation and Inspection Scheduling.**

Enforcement procedures relating to unprogrammed activity are located in subject specific chapters of this manual:

- ▶ Imminent Danger, see [Chapter 11](#), *Imminent Danger, Fatality, Catastrophe, and Emergency Response*.
- ▶ Fatality/Catastrophe, see [Chapter 11](#), *Imminent Danger, Fatality, Catastrophe, and Emergency Response*.

- ▶ Emergency Response, see [Chapter 11](#), *Imminent Danger, Fatality, Catastrophe, and Emergency Response*.
- ▶ Complaint/Referral Processing, see [Chapter 9](#), *Complaint and Referral Processing*.
- ▶ Whistleblower Complaints, see [Chapter 9](#), *Complaint and Referral Processing*.
- ▶ Follow-ups and Monitoring, see [Chapter 7](#), *Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification*.

## VI. Programmed Inspections.

### A. Site-Specific Targeting (SST) Program.

In order to achieve OSHA's goal of reducing the number of injuries and illnesses that occur at individual worksites, the Site-Specific Targeting (SST) program directs enforcement resources to those worksites where the highest rate of injuries and illness have occurred. The SST is OSHA's primary programmed inspection plan for non-construction worksites that have 40 or more employees. The SST Program is based on the data collected by the OSHA Data Initiative (ODI). The ODI collects injury and illness data from approximately 80,000 employers.

*NOTE: For in-depth information on how the SST program works see OSHA's most recent Site Specific Targeting Program.*

### B. Scheduling for Construction Inspections.

Due to the mobility of the construction industry, the transitory nature of construction worksites, and the fact that construction worksites frequently involve more than one employer, inspections are scheduled from a list of construction worksites rather than construction employers. The University of Tennessee will provide to each Area/District Office a randomly selected list of construction projects from identified or known covered active projects. This list will contain the projected number of sites which the field office has reported it plans on inspecting during the next month. Projects are selected in accordance with the inspection schedule for construction.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-141](#), Inspection Scheduling for Construction, dated July 14, 2006.*

C. **Scheduling for Maritime Inspections.**

Marine inspection activities will be covered in greater detail in [Chapter 10, Section III, Maritime](#) [Reserved].

1. **Marine Cargo Handling Industry.**

The marine cargo handling industry is made up of longshoring activities (i.e., cargo handling aboard vessels) and activities within marine terminals (i.e., cargo handling ashore). Due to the unique differences among these activities, several scheduling methods are necessary. Consequently, marine cargo handling industry inspections can be scheduled as National Emphasis Programs (NEPs), Site-Specific Targeting (SST), Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs), or from lists developed in accordance with [CPL 02-00-025, Scheduling System for Programmed Inspections](#), dated January 4, 1995.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-139](#), Longshoring and Marine Terminals “Tool Shed” Directive, dated May 23, 2006, for more information.*

2. **Shipbreaking.**

[CPL 02-00-136](#), *OSHA’s National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Shipbreaking*, dated March 16, 2005, describes policies and procedures to reduce or eliminate workplace hazards associated with shipbreaking operations.

Also, OSHA has entered into a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\)](#) on Interagency Coordination and Cooperation for Ship Scrapping (i.e., shipbreaking) between DOD, DOT, EPA, and DOL-OSHA, dated November 16, 1999.

3. **Shipyard Employment.**

The shipyard employment industry is made up of several industrial activities and due to the unique differences among these activities, several scheduling methods are necessary. Consequently, shipyard employment inspections can be scheduled under NEPs, SST, LEPs, or from lists developed in accordance with [CPL 02-00-025, Scheduling System for Programmed Inspections](#), dated January 4, 1995.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-142](#), Shipyard Employment “Tool Bag” Directive, dated August 3, 2006, for more information.*

**D. Special Emphasis Programs (SEPs).**

Special Emphasis Programs provide for programmed inspections of establishments in industries with potentially high injury or illness rates that are not covered by other programmed inspection scheduling systems or, if covered, where the potentially high injury or illness rates are not addressed to the extent considered adequate under the specific circumstances. SEPs are also based on potential exposure to health hazards. Special emphasis programs may also be used to develop and implement alternative scheduling procedures or other departures from national procedures. Special emphasis programs can include National Emphasis Programs, Regional Emphasis Programs and Local Emphasis Programs.

**1. Identification of Special Emphasis Programs.**

The description of the particular Special Emphasis Program shall be identified by one or more of the following:

- a. Specific industry;
- b. Trade/craft;
- c. Substance or other hazard;
- d. Type of workplace operation;
- e. Type/kind of equipment; and
- f. Other identifying characteristic.

**2. Special Emphasis Program Scope.**

The reasons for and the scope of a Special Emphasis Program shall be described; and may be limited by geographic boundaries, size of worksite, or similar considerations.

**3. Pilot Programs.**

National or local pilot programs may also be established under Special Emphasis Programs. Such programs may be conducted for the purpose of assessing the actual extent of suspected or potential hazards, determining the feasibility of new or experimental compliance procedures, or for any other legitimate reason.

E. **National Emphasis Programs (NEPs).**

OSHA develops National Emphasis Programs to focus outreach efforts and inspections on specific hazards in a workplace.

F. **Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs) and Regional Emphasis Programs (REPs).**

1. LEPs and REPs are types of special emphasis program in which one or more Area Offices of a Region participate. LEPs and REPs are generally based on knowledge of local industry hazards or local industry injury/illness experience. LEPs and REPs must be developed and approved when one or more Area Offices within a Region target inspections to a specific industry(ies), hazard(s), or other workplace characteristic(s), e.g., as part of, or in conjunction with, a local initiative or problem-solving project. A list of LEPs may be found on the OSHA website under the Directorate of Enforcement Programs.

*NOTE: See [CPL 04-00-001](#), Procedures for Approval of Local Emphasis Programs (LEPs), dated November 10, 1999, for additional information.*

2. OSHA directives include topic specific scheduling procedures in addition to the general information provided in this section.

G. **Other Special Programs.**

The Agency may develop programs to cover special categories of inspections which are not covered under the SST Program or under a Special Emphasis Program.

H. **Inspection Scheduling and Interface with Cooperative Program Participants.**

1. Employers who participate in voluntary compliance programs may be exempt from programmed inspections and eligible for inspection deferrals or other enforcement incentives. The Area Director or designee will determine whether the employer is actively participating in a Cooperative Program that would impact inspection and enforcement activity at the worksite being considered for inspection. Where possible, this determination should be made prior to scheduling the inspection.
2. Information regarding a facility's participation in the following programs should be available prior to scheduling inspection activity:

- a. VPP Program;
  - b. Pre-SHARP and SHARP Participants;
  - c. OSHA Strategic Partnerships; and
  - d. Consultation 90-Day Deferrals.
3. **Voluntary Protection Program.**

a. **Regional VPP Manager Responsibilities.**

The Regional VPP managers must keep the Area Director or his/her designee informed regarding VPP applicants and the status of participants in the VPP. This will prevent unnecessary scheduling of programmed inspections at VPP sites and ensure efficient use of resources. Area Directors or his/her designee should be informed:

- That the site can be removed from the programmed inspection list. Such removal may occur no more than 75 days prior to the onsite evaluation;
- Of the site's approval for the VPP program;
- Of the site's withdrawal or termination from the VPP program; and
- If the Regional VPP Manager is the first person notified by the site of an event requiring enforcement, the VPP Manager must instruct the site to contact the appropriate Area Office.

b. **Programmed Inspections and VPP Participation.**

- **Inspection Deferral.**

Approved sites must be removed from any programmed inspection lists for the duration of participation, unless a site chooses otherwise. The applicant worksite will be deferred starting no more than 75 calendar days prior to the commencement of its scheduled pre-approval onsite review.



- Inspection Exemption.

The exemption from programmed inspections for approved VPP sites will continue for as long as they continue to meet VPP requirements. Sites that have withdrawn or have been terminated from VPP will be returned to the programmed inspection list, if applicable, at the time of the next inspection cycle.

**c. Unprogrammed Enforcement Activities at VPP Sites.**

When an Area Office receives a complaint, or a referral other than from the OSHA VPP onsite team, or is notified of a fatality, catastrophe, or other event requiring an enforcement inspection at a VPP site, the Area Director or designee must initiate the inspection following normal OSHA enforcement procedures.

- The Area Office must immediately notify the Regional VPP Manager of any fatalities, catastrophes or other accidents or incidents occurring at a VPP worksite that require an enforcement inspection; as well as of a referral or complaint that concerns a VPP worksite, including complaint inquiries that would receive a letter response. If the VPP is a national VPP, the National Office should be notified.
- If the Regional VPP Manager is the first person notified by the site of an event requiring an enforcement inspection, the VPP Manager must instruct the site to contact the appropriate Area Office and the National Office if the fatality is on a National VPP site.
- The inspection will be limited to the specific issue of the unprogrammed activity. If citations are issued as a result of the inspection, a copy of the citation will be sent to the Regional VPP Manager. See [CSP 03-01-003](#), *Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP): Policies and Procedures Manual*, dated March 25, 2003.
- The Area Director will send the VPP Manager a copy of any report resulting from an enforcement case.

4. **Consultation.**

a. **Consultation Visit in Progress.**

- If an onsite consultation visit is in progress, it will take priority over OSHA programmed inspections. An onsite consultation visit will be considered "in progress" in relation to the working conditions, hazards, or situations covered by the visit from the beginning of the opening conference through the end of the correction due dates and any extensions thereof. If an onsite consultation visit is already in progress it will terminate when the following kind of OSHA compliance inspection is about to take place:
  - Imminent danger inspection;
  - Fatality/catastrophe inspection;
  - Complaint inspections; and/or
  - Other critical inspections, as determined by the Assistant Secretary.

*NOTE: Other "such critical inspections" may include, but are not limited to, referrals as defined in [Chapter 9](#), Complaint and Referral Processing. Following an evaluation of the hazards alleged in a referral, if the Assistant Secretary determines that enforcement action is required prior to the end of an abatement period established by the state consultation project, the consultation visit in progress shall be immediately terminated to allow for an enforcement inspection.*

- For purposes of efficiency and expediency, an employer's worksite shall not be subject to concurrent consultation and enforcement-related visits. The following excerpts from [CSP 02-00-002](#), *Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 7: Relationship to Enforcement*, dated January 18, 2008, to clarify the interface between enforcement and consultation activity at the worksite:
  - **Full Service OnSite Consultation Visits.**

While a worksite is undergoing a full service onsite consultation visit for safety **and** health, programmed enforcement activity may not occur until after the end of the worksite's visit "In Progress" status.

- **Full Service Safety or Health OnSite Consultation Visits.**

An onsite consultation visit "in Progress" is discipline-related, whether for safety **or** health; programmed enforcement activity may not proceed until after the end of the worksite's visit "in Progress" status, and is limited to the discipline examined, safety or health.

- **Limited Service OnSite Consultation Visits.**

If a worksite is undergoing a limited service onsite consultation visit, whether focused on a particular type of work process or a hazard, programmed enforcement activity may not proceed while the consultant is at the worksite. The re-scheduled enforcement activity must be limited only to those areas that were not addressed by the scope of the consultative visit (posted List of Hazards).

- **Enforcement Follow-Up and Monitoring Inspections.**

If an enforcement follow-up or monitoring inspection is scheduled while a worksite is undergoing an onsite consultation visit, the inspection shall not be deferred; however, its scope shall be limited only to those areas required to be covered by the follow-up or monitoring inspection. In such instances, the consultant must halt the onsite visit until the enforcement inspection is completed. In the event OSHA issues a citation(s) as a result of the follow-up or monitoring inspection, an onsite consultation visit may not proceed until the citation(s) becomes a final order(s).

**b. OnSite Consultation and 90-Day Deferral.**

- If an establishment has requested an initial full-service comprehensive consultation visit for safety or health from the State OSHA Consultation Program, and that visit has been scheduled by the State Program, a SST inspection may be deferred for 90 calendar days from the date of the notification by the State Program to the Regional Office. No extension of the deferral beyond the 90 calendar days is possible, unless the consultation visit is “in progress.”
- OSHA may, however, in exercising its authority to schedule inspections, assign a lower priority to worksites where consultation visits are scheduled.

*NOTE: See [CSP 02-00-002](#), Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 7: Relationship to Enforcement, dated January 18, 2008, for additional information.*

**5. Pre-Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (Pre-SHARP) Status.**

- a. Those employers who do not meet the SHARP requirements, but who exhibit a reasonable promise of achieving agreed-upon milestones and time frames for SHARP participation, may be granted Pre-SHARP status. Pre-SHARP participants receive a full service, comprehensive consultation visit that involves a complete safety and health hazard identification survey, including a comprehensive assessment of the worksite’s safety and health management system.
- b. The deferral time frame recommended by the State Consultation Project Manager must not exceed a total of 18 months from the expiration of the latest hazard correction due date(s), including extensions. Upon achieving Pre-SHARP status, employers may be granted a deferral from OSHA programmed inspections. The following types of incidents can trigger an OSHA enforcement inspection at Pre-SHARP sites:
  - Imminent danger;
  - Fatality/catastrophe; and
  - Formal complaints.

6. **Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).**

SHARP is designed to provide support and incentives to those employers that implement and continuously improve effective safety and health management system(s) at their worksite. SHARP participants are exempted from OSHA programmed inspections, see [§1908.7\(b\)\(4\)](#).

a. **Duration of SHARP Status.**

All initial approvals of SHARP status will be for a period of up to two years, commencing with the date the Regional Office approves an employer's SHARP application. After the initial approval, all SHARP renewals will be for a period of up to three years.

b. **OSHA Inspection(s) at SHARP Worksites.**

As noted above, employers that meet all the requirements for SHARP status will have the names of their establishments deleted from OSHA's Programmed Inspection Schedule. However, pursuant to [§1908.7\(b\)\(4\)\(ii\)](#), the following types of incidents can trigger an OSHA enforcement inspection at SHARP sites: imminent danger; fatality/catastrophe; or formal complaints.

*NOTE: See [CSP 02-00-002](#), Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual, Chapter 8: OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) and Pre-SHARP, dated January 18, 2008, for additional information.*

7. **OSHA Strategic Partnership Program (OSP).**

a. **Deferral from Programmed Inspection List for Non-Construction OSPs.**

- OSHA may offer up to a six-month deferral from programmed inspections to OSHA Strategic Partnership (OSP) participants upon their entry into a partnership. During the deferral period, the partner must commit to make workplace safety and health improvements or seek compliance assistance to improve workplace safety and health in accordance with its responsibilities under the Act.

- For a majority of OSP agreements, the beginning of the deferral period will be the effective date of the partnership agreement. However, in situations where sites join the partnership on a staggered basis, the deferral period begins at the site's actual entry into the partnership. The partnership agreement should clearly address the issue of OSP participant effective/entry dates.

**b. Programmed Inspection with a Limited Scope.**

- At OSHA's discretion, an establishment operated by a partner may receive an inspection in which the focus is limited to hazardous areas, operations, conditions or practices at the establishment. The limited scope inspection must focus on the significant worksite and industry-specific hazards based on an analysis of information available, such as:
  - BLS injury and illness data;
  - Site and corporate injury and illness data;
  - Site accident audit and inspection data; and
  - OSHA Target Industry Profiles.
- For inspections with limited scope, the workplace hazards to be addressed will be determined by OSHA with input from the partner(s). OSHA may expand the scope of the inspection based on information gathered during the inspection process.
- To gain a limited scope inspection as a benefit, the establishment must have undergone an onsite non-enforcement verification inspection within one year of the date of the programmed inspection.

**c. Deletion from Programmed Inspection List.**

- **Non-Construction.**
  - Following a comprehensive onsite enforcement inspection conducted to meet OSP verification requirements, an establishment operated by an OSP partner will be deleted from programmed inspection lists for the period of time established

for deletions in the then-current OSHA Site-Specific Targeting directive.

- If the OSP is designed to comprehensively address a hazard covered by the Act, the Area Director or designee, with the approval of the Regional Administrator, may extend the deletion for one year if the partner continues to meet the conditions of the OSP agreement and demonstrates improved performance in areas measured by the OSP.
- **Construction.**
  - An OSP agreement may provide that following an appropriate number of comprehensive onsite enforcement inspections conducted to verify satisfaction of OSP requirements, the sites, or portions of sites, over which the employer/partner exercises control is exempt from programmed inspection for a period of up to one year. This exemption is limited to the terms of the specific OSP agreement between the employer and OSHA, which are limited to the geographical boundaries of the OSHA office with whom the partnership was formed (Area, Regional, or National), if not otherwise specified in the agreement. However, it should be noted that if a serious or imminent danger condition is observed by enforcement personnel or reported to OSHA, the partner should be inspected and cited (per Agency policy).
  - This program is available only where the partner has an effective safety and health management system fully compliant with [§1926.20](#) and [§1926.21](#), and the effectiveness of the system has been confirmed during the verification inspections described above. For recordkeeping purposes, the official date of the comprehensive onsite enforcement (verification) inspection is the opening conference. Therefore, the beginning of the deletion period is the date of the opening conference of the verification inspection(s).

See [CSP 03-02-002](#), *OSHA Strategic Partnership Program for Worker Safety and Health*, dated February 10, 2005, for additional information. This verification process is sometimes referred to as the “tiered approach.”

- One such alternative to the “tiered approach” is described in the June 1, 2006 [memorandum](#), *Clarification of Verification and Exemption Policies for OSHA Strategic Partnership Program Construction Participants*. Where the partner has advised the appropriate Area/Regional office of the number and location of all worksites covered by the partnership, the RA or AD has discretion to select an appropriate number of verification visits per year. The number should not be more than the number of programmed inspections the RA/AD determines would be conducted during the same time frame. Other criteria include the number of inspections needed to cover all types of work performed by the contractor; the quality of the contractor’s safety and health management system; the phases of construction and the nature of associated hazards; and other factors which may affect OSHA’s ability to fully and accurately assess the effectiveness of the participant’s safety and health management system.

## 8. **Alliances.**

Unlike OSHA’s OSP, VPP, and SHARP programs, Alliances do not require applications, data collection, verification, or evaluation. Alliances also do not offer incentives, such as focused inspections or inspection deferral, to their signatories.



## Chapter 3

### INSPECTION PROCEDURES

#### I. Inspection Preparation.

The conduct of effective inspections requires judgment in the identification, evaluation, and documentation of safety and health conditions and practices. Inspections may vary considerably in scope and detail depending on the circumstances of each case.

#### II. Inspection Planning.

It is important that the Compliance Officer (CSHO) adequately prepare for each inspection. Due to the wide variety of industries and associated hazards likely to be encountered, pre-inspection preparation is essential to the conduct of a quality inspection.

##### A. Review of Inspection History.

1. Compliance Officers will carefully review data available at the Area Office for information relevant to the establishment scheduled for inspection. This may include inspection files and source reference material relevant to the industry. CSHOs will also conduct an establishment search by accessing the IMIS database. CSHOs should use name variations and address-matching in their establishment search to maximize their efforts due to possible company name changes and status (e.g., LLC, Inc.).
2. If an establishment has an inspection history that includes citations received while performing work in a State Plan State, CSHOs should be aware of this information. This inspection history may be used to document an employer's heightened awareness of a hazard and/or standard in order to support the development of a willful citation and may be considered in determining eligibility for the history penalty reduction. However, the state plan citation may **not** be used to support a repeat violation.

##### B. Review of Cooperative Program Participation.

CSHOs will access the Regional Homepage to obtain information about employers who are currently participating in cooperative programs. CSHOs will verify whether the employer is a current program participant during the opening conference. CSHOs will be mindful of whether they are preparing for a programmed or unprogrammed inspection, as this may

affect whether the inspection should be conducted and/or its scope. See [Paragraph V.D.](#) of this chapter, *Review of Voluntary Compliance Programs*.

C. **OSHA Data Initiative (ODI) Data Review.**

The CSHO must obtain ODI survey information for SST inspections, which is available from <http://www.ergweb3.com> (this site is available only to OSHA field personnel and requires a user name and password). If assistance is needed, contact the OSHA Regional Recordkeeping Coordinator for assistance. See [CPL 02-00-135](#), *Recordkeeping Policies and Procedures Manual*, dated December 30, 2004.

D. **Safety and Health Issues Relating to CSHOs.**

1. **Hazard Assessment.**

If the employer has a written certification that a hazard assessment has been performed pursuant to [§1910.132\(d\)](#), the CSHO shall request a copy. If the hazard assessment itself is not in writing, the CSHO shall ask the person who signed the certification to describe all potential workplace hazards and then select appropriate protective equipment. If there is no hazard assessment, the CSHO will determine potential hazards from sources such as the OSHA 300 Log of injuries and illnesses and shall select personal protective equipment accordingly.

2. **Respiratory Protection.**

CSHOs must wear respirators when and where required, and must care for and maintain respirators in accordance with the CSHO training provided.

- a. CSHOs should conduct a pre-inspection evaluation for potential exposure to chemicals. Prior to entering any hazardous areas, the CSHO should identify those work areas, processes, or tasks that require respiratory protection. The hazard assessment requirement in [§1910.132\(d\)](#) does not apply to respirators; see [CPL 02-02-054](#), *Respiratory Protection Program Guidelines*, dated July 14, 2000. CSHOs should review all pertinent information contained in the establishment file and appropriate reference sources to become knowledgeable about the industrial processes and potential respiratory hazards that may be encountered. During the opening conference, a list of hazardous substances should be obtained or identified, along with any air monitoring results.

CSHOs should determine if they have the appropriate respirator to protect against chemicals present at the work site.

- b. CSHOs must notify their supervisor or the respiratory protection program administrator:
  - If a respirator no longer fits well (CSHOs should request a replacement that fits properly);
  - If CSHOs encounter any respiratory hazards during inspections or on-site visits that they believe have not been previously or adequately addressed during the site visit; or
  - If there are any other concerns regarding the program.

3. **Safety and Health Rules and Practices.**

[Section 1903.7\(c\)](#) requires that CSHOs comply with all safety and health rules and practices at the establishment and wear or use the safety clothing or protective equipment required by OSHA standards or by the employer for the protection of employees.

4. **Restrictions.**

CSHOs will not enter any area where special entrance restrictions apply until the required precautions have been taken. It shall be the Area Director's responsibility to determine that an inspection may be conducted without exposing the CSHO to hazardous situations and to procure whatever materials and equipment are needed for the safe conduct of the inspection.

E. **Advance Notice.**

1. **Policy.**

- a. [Section 17\(f\)](#) of the Act and [§1903.6](#) contain a general prohibition against the giving of advance notice of inspections, except as authorized by the Secretary or the Secretary's designee. The Act regulates many conditions that are subject to speedy alteration and disguise by employers. To forestall such changes in worksite conditions, the Act prohibits unauthorized advance notice.

**b. Advance Notice Exceptions.**

There may be occasions when advance notice is necessary to conduct an effective investigation. These occasions are narrow exceptions to the statutory prohibition against advance notice. Advance notice of inspections may be given only with the authorization of the Area Director or designee and only in the following situations:

- In cases of apparent imminent danger to enable the employer to correct the danger as quickly as possible;
- When the inspection can most effectively be conducted after regular business hours or when special preparations are necessary;
- To ensure the presence of employer and employee representatives or other appropriate personnel who are needed to aid in the inspection; and
- When giving advance notice would enhance the probability of an effective and thorough inspection; e.g., in complex fatality investigations.

**c. Delays.**

Advance notice exists whenever the Area Office sets up a specific date or time with the employer for the CSHO to begin an inspection. Any delays in the conduct of the inspection shall be kept to an absolute minimum. Lengthy or unreasonable delays shall be brought to the attention of the Area Director or designee. Advance notice generally does not include non-specific indications of potential future inspections.

In unusual circumstances, the Area Director or designee may decide that a delay is necessary. In those cases the employer or the CSHO shall notify affected employee representatives, if any, of the delay and shall keep them informed of the status of the inspection.

**2. Documentation.**

The conditions requiring advance notice and the procedures followed shall be documented in the case file.

**F. Pre-Inspection Compulsory Process.**

1. [Section 1903.4](#) authorizes the agency to seek a warrant in advance of an attempted inspection if circumstances are such that “pre-inspection process (is) desirable or necessary.” [Section 8\(b\)](#) of the Act authorizes the agency to issue administrative subpoenas to obtain relevant information.
2. Although the agency generally does not seek warrants without evidence that the employer is likely to refuse entry, the Area Director or designee may seek compulsory process in advance of an attempt to inspect or investigate whenever circumstances indicate the desirability of such warrants.

*NOTE: Examples of such circumstances include evidence of denied entry in previous inspections, or awareness that a job will only last a short time or that job processes will be changing rapidly.*

3. Administrative subpoenas may also be issued prior to any attempt to contact the employer or other person for evidence related to an OSHA inspection or investigation. See [Chapter 15](#), *Legal Issues*.

**G. Personal Security Clearance.**

Some establishments have areas that contain material or processes that are classified by the U.S. Government in the interest of national security. Whenever an inspection is scheduled for an establishment containing classified areas, the Area Director or designee shall assign a CSHO who has the appropriate security clearances. The Regional Administrator shall ensure that an adequate number of CSHOs with appropriate security clearances are available within the Region and that the security clearances are current.

**H. Expert Assistance.**

1. The Area Director or designee shall arrange for a specialist and/or specialized training, preferably from within OSHA, to assist in an inspection or investigation when the need for such expertise is identified.
2. OSHA specialists may accompany CSHOs or perform their tasks separately. CSHOs must accompany outside consultants. OSHA specialists and outside consultants shall be briefed on the purpose of the inspection and personal protective equipment to be utilized.

### **III. Inspection Scope.**

Inspections, either programmed or unprogrammed, fall into one of two categories depending on the scope of the inspection:

#### **A. Comprehensive.**

A comprehensive inspection is a substantially complete and thorough inspection of all potentially hazardous areas of the establishment. An inspection may be deemed comprehensive even though, as a result of professional judgment, not all potentially hazardous conditions or practices within those areas are inspected.

#### **B. Partial.**

A partial inspection is one whose focus is limited to certain potentially hazardous areas, operations, conditions or practices at the establishment.

1. A partial inspection may be expanded based on information gathered by the CSHO during the inspection process consistent with the Act and Area Office priorities.
2. CSHOs shall use pre-determined criteria from their offices to determine the necessity for expanding the scope of an inspection, based on information gathered during records or program review and walkaround inspection.

### **IV. Conduct of Inspection.**

#### **A. Time of Inspection.**

1. Inspections shall be made during regular working hours of the establishment except when special circumstances indicate otherwise.
2. The Area Director or designee and the CSHO shall determine if alternate work schedules are necessary regarding entry into an inspection site during other than normal working hours.

#### **B. Presenting Credentials.**

1. At the beginning of the inspection, the CSHO shall locate the owner representative, operator or agent in charge at the workplace and present credentials. On construction sites this will most often be the representative of the general contractor.

2. When neither the person in charge nor a management official is present, contact may be made with the employer to request the presence of the owner, operator or management official. The inspection shall not be delayed unreasonably to await the arrival of the employer representative. This delay should normally not exceed one hour. On occasions when the CSHO is waiting for the employer representative, the workforce may begin to leave the jobsite. In this situation the CSHO should contact the Area Director or designee for guidance. If the person in charge at the workplace cannot be determined, record the extent of the inquiry in the case file and proceed with the physical inspection.

C. **Refusal to Permit Inspection and Interference.**

[Section 8](#) of the Act provides that CSHOs may enter without delay and at reasonable times any establishment covered under the Act for the purpose of conducting an inspection. Unless the circumstances constitute a recognized exception to the warrant requirement (i.e., consent, third party consent, plain view, open field, or exigent circumstances) an employer has a right to require that the CSHO seek an inspection warrant prior to entering an establishment and may refuse entry without such a warrant.

*NOTE: On a military base or other Federal Government facility, the following guidelines do not apply. Instead, a representative of the controlling authority shall be informed of the contractor's refusal and asked to take appropriate action to obtain cooperation.*

1. **Refusal of Entry or Inspection.**

- a. When the employer refuses to permit entry upon being presented proper credentials, or allows entry but then refuses to permit or hinders the inspection in some way, an attempt shall be made to obtain as much information as possible about the establishment. See [Chapter 15](#), *Legal Issues*, for additional information.
- b. If the employer refuses to allow an inspection of the establishment to proceed, the CSHO shall leave the premises and immediately report the refusal to the Area Director or designee. The Area Director shall notify the RSOL.
- c. If the employer raises no objection to inspection of certain portions of the workplace but objects to inspection of other portions, this shall be documented. Normally, the CSHO shall continue the inspection, confining it only to those certain portions to which the employer has raised no objections.

- d. In either case, the CSHO shall advise the employer that the refusal will be reported to the Area Director or designee and that the agency may take further action, which may include obtaining legal process.
- e. On multi-employer worksites, valid consent can be granted by the owner, or another employer with employees at the worksite, for site entry.

2. **Employer Interference.**

Where entry has been allowed but the employer interferes with or limits any important aspect of the inspection, the CSHO shall determine whether or not to consider this action as a refusal. Examples of interference are refusals to permit the walkaround, the examination of records essential to the inspection, the taking of essential photographs and/or videotapes, the inspection of a particular part of the premises, private employee interviews, or the refusal to allow attachment of sampling devices. See [§1903.7\(b\)](#).

3. **Forcible Interference with Conduct of Inspection or Other Office Duties.**

Whenever an OSHA official or employee encounters forcible resistance, opposition, interference, etc., or is assaulted or threatened with assault while engaged in the performance of official duties, all investigative activity shall cease.

- a. If a CSHO is assaulted while attempting to conduct an inspection, they shall contact the proper authorities such as the Federal Protective Services or local police and immediately notify the Area Director.
- b. Upon receiving a report of such forcible interference, the Area Director or designee shall immediately notify the Regional Administrator.
- c. If working at an offsite location, CSHOs should leave the site immediately pending further instructions from the Area Director or designee.

4. **Obtaining Compulsory Process.**

If it is determined, upon refusal of entry or refusal to produce evidence required by subpoena, that a warrant will be sought, the Area Director shall proceed according to guidelines and procedures



established in the Region for warrant applications. See [Chapter 15](#), *Legal Issues*.

**D. Employee Participation.**

CSHOs shall advise employers that [Section 8\(e\)](#) of the Act and [§1903.8](#) require that an employee representative be given an opportunity to participate in the inspection.

1. CSHOs shall determine as soon as possible after arrival whether the employees at the inspected worksite are represented and, if so, shall ensure that employee representatives are afforded the opportunity to participate in all phases of the inspection.
2. If an employer resists or interferes with participation by employee representatives in an inspection and the interference cannot be resolved by the CSHO, the resistance shall be construed as a refusal to permit the inspection and the Area Director or designee shall be contacted.

**E. Release for Entry.**

1. CSHOs shall not sign any form or release or agree to any waiver. This includes any employer forms concerned with trade secret information.
2. CSHOs may obtain a pass or sign a visitor's register, or any other book or form used by the establishment to control the entry and movement of persons upon its premises. Such signature shall not constitute any form of a release or waiver of prosecution of liability under the Act.

**F. Bankrupt or Out of Business.**

1. If the establishment scheduled for inspection is found to have ceased business and there is no known successor, the CSHO shall report the facts to the Area Director or designee.
2. If an employer, although bankrupt, is continuing to operate on the date of the scheduled inspection, the inspection shall proceed.
3. An employer must comply with the Act until the day the business actually ceases to operate.

G. **Employee Responsibilities.**

1. [Section 5\(b\)](#) of the Act states: "Each employee shall comply with occupational safety and health standards and all rules, regulations, and orders issued pursuant to the Act which are applicable to his own actions and conduct." The Act does not provide for the issuance of citations or the proposal of penalties against employees. Employers are responsible for employee compliance with the standards.
2. In cases where CSHOs determine that employees are systematically refusing to comply with a standard applicable to their own action and conduct, the matter shall be referred to the Area Director who shall consult with the Regional Administrator.
3. Under no circumstances are CSHOs to become involved in an onsite dispute involving labor-management issues or interpretation of collective-bargaining agreements. CSHOs are expected to obtain sufficient information to assess whether the employer is using its authority to ensure employee compliance with the Act. Concerted refusals to comply by employees will not bar the issuance of a citation if the employer has failed to exercise its control to the maximum extent reasonable, including discipline and discharge.

H. **Strike or Labor Dispute.**

Plants or establishments may be inspected regardless of the existence of labor disputes, such as work stoppages, strikes or picketing. If the CSHO identifies an unanticipated labor dispute at a proposed inspection site, the Area Director or designee shall be consulted before any contact is made.

1. **Programmed Inspections.**

Programmed inspections may be deferred during a strike or labor dispute, either between a recognized union and the employer or between two unions competing for bargaining rights in the establishment.

2. **Unprogrammed Inspections.**

- a. Unprogrammed inspections (complaints, fatalities, referrals, etc.) will be performed during strikes or labor disputes. However, the credibility and veracity of any complaint shall be thoroughly assessed by the Area Director or designee prior to scheduling an inspection.

- b. If there is a picket line at the establishment, CSHOs shall attempt to locate and inform the appropriate union official of the reason for the inspection prior to initiating the inspection.
- c. During the inspection, CSHOs will make every effort to ensure that their actions are not interpreted as supporting either party to the labor dispute.

#### I. **Variances.**

The employer's requirement to comply with a standard may be modified through granting of a variance, as outlined in [Section 6](#) of the Act.

1. An employer will not be subject to citation if the observed condition is in compliance with an existing variance issued to that employer.
2. In the event that an employer is not in compliance with the requirement(s) of the issued variance, a violation of the applicable standard shall be cited with a reference in the citation to the variance provision that has not been met.

#### V. **Opening Conference.**

##### A. **General.**

CSHOs shall attempt to inform all affected employers of the purpose of the inspection, provide a copy of the complaint if applicable, and include any employee representatives, unless the employer objects. The opening conference should be brief so that the compliance officer may quickly proceed to the walkaround. Conditions of the worksite shall be noted upon arrival, as well as any changes that may occur during the opening conference. At the start of the opening conference, CSHOs will provide both the employer and the employee representative(s) copies of their rights during the inspection, including the opportunity to participate in the physical inspection of the workplace.

CSHOs shall request a copy of the written certification that a hazard assessment has been performed by the employer in accordance with [§1910.132\(d\)](#). CSHOs should then ask the person who signed the certification about any potential worksite exposures and select appropriate personal protective equipment.

1. **Attendance at Opening Conference.**

- a. CSHOs shall conduct a joint opening conference with employer and employee representatives unless either party objects.
- b. If there is objection to a joint conference, the CSHO shall conduct separate conferences with employer and employee representatives.

2. **Scope of Inspection.**

CSHOs shall outline in general terms the scope of the inspection, including the need for private employee interviews, physical inspection of the workplace and records, possible referrals, rights during an inspection, discrimination complaints, and the closing conference(s).

3. **Video/Audio Recording.**

CSHOs shall inform participants that a video camera and/or an audio recorder may be used to provide a visual and/or audio record, and that the videotape and audiotape may be used in the same manner as handwritten notes and photographs in OSHA inspections.

*NOTE: If an employer clearly refuses to allow videotaping during an inspection, CSHOs shall contact the Area Director to determine if videotaping is critical to documenting the case. If it is, this may be treated as a denial of entry.*

4. **Immediate Abatement.**

CSHOs should explain to employers the advantages of immediate abatement, including that there are no certification requirements for violations quickly corrected during the inspection. See [Chapter 7](#), *Post-Inspection Procedures and Abatement Verification*.

5. **Quick-Fix Penalty Reduction.**

CSHOs shall advise both the employer and employee representatives, if applicable, that the Quick-Fix penalty reduction may be applied to each qualified violation (i.e., those which meet the criteria noted in [Chapter 6](#)), which the employer immediately abates during the inspection and is visually verified by the CSHO. CSHOs shall explain the Quick-Fix criteria and answer any

questions concerning the program. See [Chapter 6, Penalties and Debt Collection](#).

**6. Abbreviated Opening Conference.**

An abbreviated opening conference shall be conducted whenever the CSHO believes that circumstances at the worksite dictate the walkaround begin as promptly as possible.

- a. In such cases, the opening conference shall be limited to presenting credentials, purpose of the visit, explanation of rights, and a request for employer and employee representatives. All other elements shall be fully addressed in the closing conference.
- b. Pursuant to [§1903.8](#), the employer and the employee representatives shall be informed of the opportunity to participate in the physical inspection of the workplace.

**B. Review of Appropriation Act Exemptions and Limitation.**

CSHOs shall determine if the employer is covered by any exemptions or limitations noted in the current Appropriations Act. See [CPL 02-00-051, Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act](#), dated May 28, 1998.

**C. Review Screening for Process Safety Management (PSM) Coverage.**

CSHOs shall request a list of the chemicals on site and their respective maximum intended inventories. CSHOs shall review the list of chemicals and quantities, and determine if there are highly hazardous chemicals (HHCs) listed in [§1910.119, Appendix A](#) or flammable liquids or gases at or above the specified threshold quantity. CSHOs may ask questions, conduct interviews, or a walkaround to confirm the information on the list of chemicals and maximum intended inventories.

1. If there is an HHC present at or above threshold quantities, CSHOs shall use the following criteria to determine if any exemptions apply:
  - a. CSHOs shall confirm that the facility is not a retail facility, oil or gas well drilling or servicing operation, or normally unoccupied remote facility ([§1910.119\(a\)\(2\)](#)). If the facility is one of these types of establishments, PSM does not apply.

- b. If management believes that the process is exempt, CSHOs shall ask the employer to provide documentation or other information to support that claim.
2. According to [§1910.119 \(a\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#), a process could be exempt if the employer can demonstrate that the covered chemical(s) are:
    - a. Hydrocarbon fuels used solely for workplace consumption as a fuel (e.g., propane used for comfort heating, gasoline for vehicle refueling), if such fuels are not a part of a process containing another highly hazardous chemical covered by the standard, or
    - b. Flammable liquids stored in atmospheric tanks or transferred, which are kept below their normal boiling point without the benefit of chilling or refrigeration.

*NOTE: Current agency policies for applying exemptions can be found on the OSHA website. See [CPL 03-00-004](#), Petroleum Refinery Process Safety Management National Emphasis Program, dated June 7, 2007.*

#### D. **Review of Voluntary Compliance Programs.**

Employers who participate in selected voluntary compliance programs may be exempted from programmed inspections. CSHOs shall determine whether the employer falls under such an exemption during the opening conference.

1. **OSHA On-Site Consultation Visits.**
  - a. In accordance with [§1908.7](#) and Chapter VII of [CSP 02-00-002](#), *The Consultation Policies and Procedures Manual*, CSHOs shall ascertain at the opening conference whether an OSHA-funded consultation visit is in progress. A consultation Visit in Progress extends from the beginning of the opening conference to the end of the correction due dates (including extensions).
  - b. An on-site consultation Visit in Progress has priority over programmed inspections except for imminent danger investigations, fatality/catastrophe investigations, complaint investigations, and other critical inspections as determined by the Assistant Secretary as noted in [§1908.7\(b\)\(2\)](#).

2. **Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).**

- a. Upon verifying that the employer is a current participant, the CSHO shall notify the Area Director or designee so that the company can be removed from the OSHA General Programmed Inspection Schedule for the approved exemption period, which begins on the date the Regional Office approves the employer's participation in SHARP.
- b. The initial exemption period is one year. The renewal exemption period is one or two years, based on the recommendation of the Consultation Project Manager.

3. **Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).**

Inspections at a VPP site may be conducted in response to referrals, formal complaints, fatalities, and catastrophes.

*NOTE: A Compliance Officer who was previously a VPP on-site team member cannot conduct an enforcement inspection at that VPP site for the following 2 years or until the site is no longer a VPP participant, whichever occurs first. See [CSP 03-01-003](#), Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP): Policies and Procedures Manual, dated April 18, 2008.*

E. **Disruptive Conduct.**

CSHOs may deny the right of accompaniment to any person whose conduct interferes with a full and orderly inspection. See [§1903.8\(d\)](#). If disruption or interference occurs, the CSHO shall contact the Area Director or designee as to whether to suspend the walkaround or take other action. The employee representative shall be advised that during the inspection matters unrelated to the inspection shall not be discussed with employees.

F. **Classified Areas.**

In areas containing information classified by an agency of the U.S. Government in the interest of national security, only persons authorized to have access to such information may accompany a CSHO on the inspection. See [§1903.8\(d\)](#).

## **VI. Review of Records.**

### **A. Injury and Illness Records.**

#### **1. Collection of Data.**

- a. At the start of each inspection, the CSHO shall review the employer's injury and illness records for three prior calendar years, record the information on a copy of the OSHA-300 screen, and enter the employer's data using the IMIS Application on the NCR (micro). This shall be done for all general industry, construction, maritime, and agriculture inspections and investigations.
- b. CSHOs shall use these data to calculate the Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred (DART) rate and to observe trends, potential hazards, types of operations and work-related injuries

#### **2. Information to be Obtained.**

- a. CSHOs shall request copies of the OSHA-300 Logs, the total hours worked and the average number of employees for each year, and a roster of current employees.
- b. If CSHOs have questions regarding a specific case on the log, they shall request the OSHA-301s or equivalent form for that case.
- c. CSHOs shall check if the establishment has an on-site medical facility and/or the location of the nearest emergency room where employees may be treated.

*NOTE: The total hours worked and the average number of employees for each year can be found on the OSHA-300A for all past years.*

#### **3. Automatic DART Rate Calculation.**

CSHOs will not normally need to calculate the Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred (DART) rate since it is automatically calculated when the OSHA-300 data are entered into the micro. If one of the three years is a partial year, so indicate and the software will calculate accordingly.



4. **Manual DART Rate Calculation.**

If it is necessary to calculate rates manually, the CSHO will calculate the DART Rates onsite using the following procedures. The DART rate includes cases involving days away from work, restricted work activity, and transfers to another job.

The formula is:

$(N/EH) \times (200,000)$  where:

- *N* is the number of cases involving days away and/or restricted work activity and job transfers.
- *EH* is the total number of hours worked by all employees during the calendar year; and
- **200,000** is the base number of hours worked for 100 full-time equivalent employees.

**EXAMPLE 3-1:** Employees of an establishment (XYZ Company), including management, temporary and leased workers, worked 645,089 hours at XYZ company. There were 22 injury and illness cases involving days away and/or restricted work activity and/or job transfer from the OSHA-300 Log (total of column H plus column I). The DART rate would be  $(22 \div 645,089) \times (200,000) = 6.8$ .

5. **Construction.**

For construction inspections/investigations, only the OSHA-300 information for the prime/general contractor need be recorded where such records exist and are maintained. It will be left to the discretion of the Area Director or the CSHO as to whether OSHA-300 data should also be recorded for any of the subcontractors.

6. **Federal Agencies.**

Federal agency injury and illness recording and reporting requirements shall comply with the requirements under [§1904](#), subparts C, D, E, and G, except that the definition of “establishment” found in [§1960.2\(h\)](#) will remain applicable to Federal agencies.

**B. Recording Criteria.**

Employers must record new work-related injuries and illnesses that meet one or more of the general recording criteria or meet the recording criteria for specific types of conditions.

1. Death;
2. Days Away from Work;
3. Restricted Work;
4. Transfer to another job;
5. Medical treatment beyond first aid;
6. Loss of consciousness;
7. Diagnosis of a significant injury or illness; or
8. Meet the recording criteria for Specific Cases noted in [§1904.8](#) through [§1904.11](#).

**C. Recordkeeping Deficiencies.**

1. If recordkeeping deficiencies are suspected, the CSHO and the Area Director or designee may request assistance from the Regional Recordkeeping Coordinator. If there is evidence that the deficiencies or inaccuracies in the employer's records impairs the ability to assess hazards, injuries and/or illnesses at the workplace, a comprehensive records review shall be performed.
2. Other information related to this topic:
  - a. See [CPL 02-00-135](#), *Recordkeeping Policies and Procedures Manual*, dated September 3, 2004, and [CPL 02-02-072](#), *Rules of Agency Practice and Procedure concerning OSHA Access to Employee Medical Records for Policy Regarding Review of Medical and Exposure Records*, dated August 22, 2007.
  - b. Other OSHA programs and records will be reviewed including hazard communication, lockout/tagout, emergency evacuation and personal protective equipment. Additional programs will be reviewed as necessary.

- c. Many standard-specific directives provide additional instruction to CSHOs requesting certain records and/or documents at the opening conference.

## **VII. Walkaround Inspection.**

The main purpose of the walkaround inspection is to identify potential safety and/or health hazards in the workplace. CSHOs shall conduct the inspection in such a manner as to avoid unnecessary personal exposure to hazards and to minimize unavoidable personal exposure to the extent possible.

### **A. Walkaround Representatives.**

Persons designated to accompany CSHOs during the walkaround are considered walkaround representatives, and will generally include those designated by the employer and employee. At establishments where more than one employer is present or in situations where groups of employees have different representatives, it is acceptable to have a different employer/employee representative for different phases of the inspection. More than one employer and/or employee representative may accompany the CSHO throughout or during any phase of an inspection if the CSHO determines that such additional representatives will aid, and not interfere with, the inspection. See [§1903.8\(a\)](#).

#### **1. Employees Represented by a Certified or Recognized Bargaining Agent.**

During the opening conference, the highest ranking union official or union employee representative onsite shall designate who will participate in the walkaround. OSHA regulation [§1903.8\(b\)](#) gives the CSHO the authority to resolve all disputes as to whom is the representative authorized by the employer and employees. [Section 1903.8\(c\)](#) states that the representative authorized by the employees shall be an employee of the employer. If in the judgment of the CSHO, good cause has been shown why accompaniment by a third party who is not an employee of the employer (such as an industrial hygienist or a safety engineer) is reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough physical inspection of the workplace, such third party may accompany CSHOs during the inspection.

#### **2. No Certified or Recognized Bargaining Agent.**

Where employees are not represented by an authorized representative, there is no established safety committee, or employees have not chosen or agreed to an employee representative for OSHA inspection purposes (regardless of the

existence of a safety committee), CSHOs shall determine if other employees would suitably represent the interests of employees on the walkaround. If selection of such an employee is impractical, CSHOs shall conduct interviews with a reasonable number of employees during the walkaround.

3. **Safety Committee.**

Employee members of an established plant safety committee or employees at large may designate an employee representative for OSHA inspection purposes,

B. **Evaluation of Safety and Health System.**

The employer's safety and health system shall be evaluated to determine its good faith for the purposes of penalty calculation. See [Chapter 6](#), *Penalties and Debt Collection*.

C. **Record All Facts Pertinent to a Violation.**

1. Safety and health violations shall be brought to the attention of employer and employee representatives at the time they are documented.
2. CSHOs shall record, at a minimum, the identity of the exposed employee(s), the hazard to which the employee(s) was exposed, the employee's proximity to the hazard, the employer's knowledge of the condition, and the manner in which important measurements were obtained and how long the condition has existed.
3. CSHOs will document interview statements in a thorough and accurate manner; including names, dates, times, locations, type of materials, positions of pertinent articles, witnesses, etc.

*NOTE: If employee exposure to hazards is not observed, the CSHO shall document facts on which the determination is made that an employee has been or could be exposed. See [Chapter 4](#), *Violations and Chapter 5*, Case File Preparation and Documentation.*

D. **Testifying in Hearings.**

CSHOs may be required to testify in hearings on OSHA's behalf, and shall be mindful of this fact when recording observations during inspections. The case file shall reflect conditions observed in the workplace as accurately and detailed as possible.

E. **Trade Secrets.**

A trade secret, as referenced in [Section 15](#) of the Act, includes information concerning or related to processes, operations, style of work, or apparatus, or to the identity, confidential statistical data, amount or source of any income, profits, losses, or expenditures of any person, firm, partnership, corporation, or association. See [18 USC 1905](#).

1. **Policy.**

It is essential to the effective enforcement of the Act that CSHOs and OSHA personnel preserve the confidentiality of all information and investigations which might reveal a trade secret.

2. **Restriction and Controls.**

When the employer identifies an operation or condition as a trade secret, it shall be treated as such. Information obtained in such areas, including all negatives, photographs, videotapes, and OSHA documentation forms, shall be labeled:

"ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTROLLED INFORMATION"  
"RESTRICTED TRADE INFORMATION"

- a. Under [Section 15](#) of the Act, all information reported to or obtained by CSHOs in connection with any inspection or other activity which contains or which might reveal a trade secret shall be kept confidential. Such information shall not be disclosed except to other OSHA officials concerned with the enforcement of the Act or, when relevant, in any proceeding under the Act.
  - b. [Title 18 USC 1905](#) provides criminal penalties for Federal employees who disclose such information. These penalties include fines of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, and removal from office or employment.
  - c. Trade secret materials shall not be labeled as "Top Secret," "Secret," or "Confidential," nor shall these security classification designations be used in conjunction with other words unless the trade secrets are also classified by an agency of the U.S. Government in the interest of national security.
3. If the employer objects to the taking of photographs and/or videotapes because trade secrets would or may be disclosed, CSHOs should advise the employer of the protection against such

disclosure afforded by [Section 15](#) of the Act and [§1903.9](#). If the employer still objects, CSHOs shall contact the Area Director or designee.

**F. Collecting Samples.**

1. CSHOs shall determine early in the inspection whether sampling such as, but not limited to, air sampling and surface sampling is required, by utilizing the information collected during the walk around and from the pre-inspection review.
2. Summaries of the results shall be provided on request to the appropriate employees, including those exposed or likely to be exposed to a hazard, employer representatives and employee representatives.

**G. Photographs and Videotapes.**

1. Photographs and/or videotapes, whether digital or otherwise, shall be taken whenever CSHOs determine there is a need.
  - a. Photographs that support violations shall be properly labeled, and may be attached to the appropriate OSHA-1B.
  - b. CSHO shall ensure that any photographs relating to confidential or trade secret information are identified as such and are kept separate from other evidence.
2. All film and photographs or videotape shall be retained in the case file. If lack of storage space does not permit retaining the film, photographs or videotapes with the file, they may be stored elsewhere with a reference to the corresponding inspection. Videotapes shall be properly labeled. For more information regarding guidelines for case file documentation with video, audio and digital media, see OSHA Instruction [CPL 02-00-098](#), *Guidelines for Case File Documentation for Use with Videotapes and Audiotapes*, dated October 12, 1993, and any other directives related to photograph and videotape retention.

**H. Violations of Other Laws.**

If a CSHO observes apparent violations of laws enforced by other government agencies, such cases shall be referred to the appropriate agency. Referrals shall be made using appropriate Regional procedures.

## I. **Interviews of Non-Managerial Employees.**

A free and open exchange of information between CSHOs and employees is essential to an effective inspection. Interviews provide an opportunity for employees to supply valuable factual information concerning hazardous conditions, including information on how long workplace conditions have existed, the number and extent of employee exposure(s) to a hazardous condition, and the actions of management regarding correction of a hazardous condition.

### 1. **Background.**

- a. [Section 8\(a\)\(2\)](#) of the Act authorizes CSHOs to question **any employee privately** during regular working hours or at other reasonable times during the course of an OSHA inspection. The purpose of such interviews is to obtain whatever information CSHOs deem necessary or useful in carrying out inspections effectively. The mandate to interview employees in private is OSHA's right.
- b. Employee interviews are an effective means to determine if an advance notice of inspection has adversely affected the inspection conditions, as well as to obtain information regarding the employer's knowledge of the workplace conditions or work practices in effect prior to, and at the time of, the inspection. During interviews with employees, CSHOs should ask about these matters.
- c. CSHOs should also obtain information concerning the presence and/or implementation of a safety and health system to prevent or control workplace hazards.
- d. If an employee refuses to be interviewed, the CSHO shall use professional judgment, in consultation with the Area Director or designee, in determining the need for the statement.

### 2. **Employee Right of Complaint.**

CSHOs may consult with any employee who desires to discuss a potential violation. Upon receipt of such information, CSHOs shall investigate the alleged hazard, where possible, and record the findings.

### 3. **Time and Location of Interview.**

CSHOs are authorized to conduct interviews during regular working hours and at other reasonable times, and in a reasonable

manner at the workplace. Interviews often occur during the walkaround, but may be conducted at any time during an inspection. If necessary, interviews may be conducted at locations other than the workplace. CSHOs should consult with the Area Director if an interview is to be conducted someplace other than the workplace. Where appropriate, OSHA has the authority to subpoena an employee to appear at the Area Office for an interview.

4. **Conducting Interviews of Non-Managerial Employees in Private.**

CSHOs shall inform employers that interviews of non-managerial employees will be conducted in private. CSHOs are entitled to question such employees in private regardless of employer preference. If an employer interferes with a CSHOs ability to do so, the CSHO should request that the AD consult with RSOL to determine appropriate legal action. Interference with a CSHO's ability to conduct private interviews with non-managerial employees includes, but is not limited to, attempts by management officials or representatives to be present during interviews.

5. **Conducting Employee Interviews.**

a. **General Protocols.**

- At the beginning of the interview CSHOs should identify themselves to the employee by showing their credentials, and provide the employee with a business card. This allows employees to contact CSHOs if they have further information at a later time.
- CSHOs should explain to employees that the reason for the interview is to gather factual information relevant to a safety and health inspection. It is not appropriate to assume that employees already know or understand the agency's purpose. Particular sensitivity is required when interviewing a non-English speaking employee. In such instances, CSHOs should initially determine whether the employee's comprehension of English is sufficient to permit conducting an effective interview. If an interpreter is needed, CSHOs should contact the General Services Administration (GSA) tele-interpreter or use the Area Office's protocol for interpreters.



- Every employee should be asked to provide his or her name, home address and phone number. CSHOs should request identification and make clear the reason for asking for this information.
- CSHOs shall inform employees that OSHA has the right to interview them in private and of the protections afforded under [Section 11\(c\)](#) of the Act.
- In the event an employee requests that a representative of the union be present, CSHOs shall make a reasonable effort to honor the request.
- If an employee requests that his/her personal attorney be present during the interview, CSHOs should honor the request and, before continuing with the interview, consult with the Area Director for guidance.
- Rarely, an attorney for the employer may claim that individual employees have also authorized the attorney to represent them. Such a situation creates a potential conflict of interest. CSHOs should ask the affected employees whether they have agreed to be represented by the attorney. If the employees indicate that they have, CSHOs should consult with the Area Director, who will contact RSOL.

**b. Interview Statements.**

Interview statements of employees or other persons shall be obtained whenever CSHOs determine that such statements would be useful in documenting potential violations. Interviews shall normally be reduced to writing and written in the first person in the language of the individual. Employees shall be encouraged to sign and date the statement.

- Any changes or corrections to the statement shall be initialed by the individual. Statements shall not otherwise be changed or altered in any manner.
- Statements shall include the words, “I request that my statement be held confidential to the extent allowed by law” and end with the following; “I have read the above, and it is true to the best of my knowledge.”

- If the person making the declaration refuses to sign, the CSHO shall note the refusal on the statement. The statement shall, nevertheless, be read back to the person in an attempt to obtain agreement and noted in the case file.
- A transcription of any recorded statement shall be made when necessary to the case.
- Upon request, if a management employee requests a copy of his/her interview statement, one shall be given to them.

c. **The Informant Privilege.**

- The informant privilege allows the government to withhold the **identity** of individuals who provide information about the violation of laws, including OSHA rules and regulations. CSHOs shall inform employees that their statements will remain confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, each employee giving a statement should be informed that disclosure of his or her identity may be necessary in connection with enforcement or court actions.

*NOTE: Whenever CSHOs make an assurance of confidentiality as part of an investigation (i.e. informs the person giving the statement that their identity will be protected), the pledge shall be reduced to writing and included in the case file.*

- The privilege also protects the contents of statements to the extent that disclosure may reveal the witness's identity. Where the contents of a statement will not disclose the identity of the informant (i.e., does not reveal the witness' job title, work area, job duties, or other information that would tend to reveal the individual's identity), the privilege does not apply. Interviewed employees shall be told that they are under no legal obligation to inform anyone, including employers, that they provided information to OSHA. Interviewed employees shall also be informed that if they voluntarily disclose such information to others, it may impair the agency's ability to invoke the privilege.

**J. Multi-Employer Worksites.**

On multi-employer worksites (in all industry sectors), more than one employer may be cited for a hazardous condition that violates an OSHA standard. A two-step process must be followed in determining whether more than one employer is to be cited. See [CPL 02-00-124](#), *Multi-Employer Citation Policy*, dated December 10, 1999, for further guidance.

**K. Administrative Subpoena.**

Whenever there is a reasonable need for records, documents, testimony and/or other supporting evidence necessary for completing an inspection scheduled in accordance with any current and approved inspection scheduling system or an investigation of any matter properly falling within the statutory authority of the agency, the Regional Administrator, or authorized Area Director or designee, may issue an administrative subpoena. See [Chapter 15](#), *Legal Issues*.

**L. Employer Abatement Assistance.**

**1. Policy.**

CSHOs shall offer appropriate abatement assistance during the walkaround as to how workplace hazards might be eliminated. The information shall provide guidance to the employer in developing acceptable abatement methods or in seeking appropriate professional assistance. CSHOs shall not imply OSHA endorsement of any product through use of specific product names when recommending abatement measures. The issuance of citations shall not be delayed.

**2. Disclaimers.**

The employer shall be informed that:

- a. The employer is not limited to the abatement methods suggested by OSHA;
- b. The methods explained are general and may not be effective in all cases; and
- c. The employer is responsible for selecting and carrying out an effective abatement method, and maintaining the appropriate documentation.

## VIII. Closing Conference.

### A. Participants.

At the conclusion of an inspection, CSHOs shall conduct a closing conference with the employer and the employee representatives, jointly or separately, as circumstances dictate. The closing conference may be conducted on-site or by telephone as CSHOs deem appropriate. If the employer refuses to allow a closing conference, the circumstances of the refusal shall be documented in the OSHA-1A narrative and the case shall be processed as if a closing conference had been held.

*NOTE: When conducting separate closing conferences for employers and labor representatives (where the employer has declined to have a joint closing conference with employee representatives), CSHOs shall normally hold the conference with employee representatives first, unless the employee representative requests otherwise. This procedure will ensure that worker input is received before employers are informed of violations and proposed citations.*

### B. Discussion Items.

1. CSHOs shall discuss the apparent violations and other pertinent issues found during the inspection and note relevant comments on the OSHA-1B, including input for establishing correction dates.
2. CSHOs shall give employers the publication, "Employer Rights and Responsibilities Following an OSHA Inspection," (OSHA-3000) which explains the responsibilities and courses of action available to the employer if a citation is issued, including their rights under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (SBREFA). (See [SBREFA](#) on OSHA's public webpage.) They shall then briefly discuss the information in the booklet and answer any questions. All matters discussed during the closing conference shall be documented in the case file, including a note describing printed materials distributed.
3. CSHOs shall discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the employer's occupational safety and health system and any other applicable programs, and advise the employer of the benefits of an effective program(s) and provide information, such as, OSHA's website, describing program elements.
4. Both the employer and employee representatives shall be advised of their rights to participate in any subsequent conferences, meeting or discussions, and their contest rights. Any unusual

circumstances noted during the closing conference shall be documented in the case file.

5. Since CSHOs may not have all pertinent information at the time of the first closing conference, a second closing conference may be held by telephone or in person.
6. CSHOs shall advise employee representatives that:
  - a. Under [§2200.20](#) of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission regulations, if an employer contests a citation, the employees have a right to elect “party status” before the Review Commission;
  - b. The employer should notify them if a notice of contest or a petition for modification of abatement date is filed;
  - c. They have [Section 11\(c\)](#) rights; and
  - d. They have a right to contest the abatement date. Such contests must be in writing and must be postmarked within 15 working days after receipt of the citation.

**C. Advice to Attendees.**

1. The CSHO shall advise those attending the closing conference that a request for an informal conference with the OSHA Area Director is encouraged as it provides an opportunity to:
  - a. Resolve disputed citations and penalties without the need for litigation which can be time consuming and costly;
  - b. Obtain a more complete understanding of the specific safety or health standards which apply;
  - c. Discuss ways to correct the violations;
  - d. Discuss issues concerning proposed penalties;
  - e. Discuss proposed abatement dates;
  - f. Discuss issues regarding employee safety and health practices; and
  - g. Learn more of other OSHA programs and services available.

2. If a citation is issued, an informal conference or the request for one does not extend the 15 working-day period in which the employer or employee representatives may contest.
3. Verbal disagreement with, or intent to, contest a citation, penalty or abatement date during an informal conference does not replace the required written Notice of Intent to Contest.
4. Employee representatives have the right to participate in informal conferences or negotiations between the Area Director and the employer in accordance with the guidelines given in [Chapter 7, Section II., Informal Conferences.](#)

**D. Penalties.**

CSHOs shall explain that penalties must be paid within 15 working days after the employer receives a citation and notification of penalty. If, however, an employer contests the citation and/or the penalty, penalties need not be paid for the contested items until the final order date.

**E. Feasible Administrative, Work Practice and Engineering Controls.**

Where appropriate, CSHOs will discuss control methodology with the employer during the closing conference.

**1. Definitions.**

a. *Engineering Controls.*

Consist of substitution, isolation, ventilation and equipment modification.

b. *Administrative Controls.*

Any procedure which significantly limits daily exposure by control or manipulation of the work schedule or manner in which work is performed is considered a means of administrative control. The use of personal protective equipment is not considered a means of administrative control.

c. *Work Practice Controls.*

A type of administrative controls by which the employer modifies the manner in which the employee performs assigned work. Such modification may result in a reduction of exposure through such methods as changing work habits, improving

sanitation and hygiene practices, or making other changes in the way the employee performs the job.

d. *Feasibility.*

Abatement measures required to correct a citation item are feasible when they can be accomplished by the employer. The CSHO, following current directions and guidelines, shall inform the employer, where appropriate, that a determination will be made as to whether engineering or administrative controls are feasible.

e. *Technical Feasibility.*

The existence of technical know-how as to materials and methods available or adaptable to specific circumstances, which can be applied to a cited violation with a reasonable possibility that employee exposure to occupational hazards will be reduced.

f. *Economic Feasibility.*

Means that the employer is financially able to undertake the measures necessary to abate the citations received.

*NOTE: If an employer's level of compliance lags significantly behind that of its industry, allegations of economic infeasibility will not be accepted.*

2. **Documenting Claims of Infeasibility.**

- a. CSHOs shall document the underlying facts which give rise to an employer's claim of infeasibility.
- b. When economic infeasibility is claimed, the CSHO shall inform the employer that, although the cost of corrective measures to be taken will generally not be considered as a factor in the issuance of a citation, it may be considered during an informal conference or during settlement negotiations.
- c. Complex issues regarding feasibility should be referred to the Area Director or designee for determination.

F. **Reducing Employee Exposure.**

Employers shall be advised that, whenever feasible, engineering, administrative or work practice controls must be instituted, even if they are not sufficient to eliminate the hazard (or to reduce exposure to or below the permissible exposure limit). They are required in conjunction with personal protective equipment to further reduce exposure to the lowest practical level.

G. **Abatement Verification.**

During the closing conference the Compliance Officer should thoroughly explain to the employer the abatement verification requirements. See [Chapter 7](#), *Post Inspection Procedures and Abatement Verification*.

1. **Abatement Certification.**

Abatement certification is required for all citation item(s) which the employer received except for those citation items which are identified as “Corrected During Inspection.”

2. **Corrected During Inspection (CDI).**

The violation(s) that will reflect on-site abatement and will be identified in the citations as “Corrected During Inspection” shall be reviewed at the closing conference.

3. **Abatement Documentation.**

Abatement documentation, the employer’s physical proof of abatement, is required to be submitted along with each willful, repeat and designated serious violation. To minimize confusion, the distinction between abatement certification and abatement documentation should be discussed.

4. **Placement of Abatement Verification Tags.**

The required placement of abatement verification tags or the citation must also be discussed at the closing conference, if it has not been discussed during the walkaround portion of the inspection. See [§1903.19\(i\)](#).

5. **Requirements for Extended Abatement Periods.**

Where extended abatement periods are involved, the requirements for abatement plans and progress reports shall be discussed.



## H. **Employee Discrimination.**

The CSHO shall emphasize that the Act prohibits employers from discharging or discriminating in any way against an employee who has exercised any right under the Act, including the right to make safety or health complaints or to request an OSHA inspection.

## IX. **Special Inspection Procedures.**

### A. **Follow-up and Monitoring Inspections.**

1. The primary purpose of a follow-up inspection is to determine if the previously cited violations have been corrected. Monitoring inspections are conducted to ensure that hazards are being abated and employees protected, whenever a long period of time is needed for an establishment to come into compliance (or to verify compliance with the terms of granted variances). Issuance of willful, repeated and high gravity serious violations, failure to abate notifications, and/or citations related to imminent danger situations are examples of prime candidates for follow-up or monitoring inspections. These type of inspections will not normally be conducted when evidence of abatement is provided by the employer or employee representatives.

#### 2. **Failure to Abate.**

- a. A failure to abate exists when a previously cited violation continues unabated and the abatement date has passed or the abatement date is covered under a settlement agreement, or the employer has not complied with interim measures within the allotted time specified in a long-term abatement plan.
- b. If previously cited items have not been corrected, a Notice of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation shall normally be issued. If a subsequent inspection indicates the condition has still not been abated, the RSOL shall be consulted for further guidance.

*NOTE: If the employer has demonstrated a good faith effort to comply, a late Petition for Modification of Abatement (PMA) may be considered in accordance with [Chapter 7, Section III](#), Petition for Modification of Abatement (PMA).*

- c. If an originally cited violation has at one point been abated but subsequently recurs, a citation for a repeated violation may be appropriate.

3. **Reports.**

- a. For any items found to be abated, a copy of the previous OSHA-1B, OSHA-1B-IH, or citation can be notated with "corrected" written on it, along with a brief explanation of the abatement measures taken. This information may alternately be included in the narrative of the investigative file.
- b. In the event that any item has not been abated, complete documentation shall be included on an OSHA-1B.

4. **Follow-up Files.**

Follow-up inspection reports shall be included with the original (parent) case file.

B. **Construction Inspections.**

1. **Standards Applicability.**

The standards published as [29 CFR Part 1926](#) have been adopted as occupational safety and health standards under [Section 6\(a\)](#) of the Act and [§1910.12](#). They shall apply to every employment and place of employment of every employee engaged in construction work, including non-contract construction.

2. **Definition.**

The term "construction work" as defined by [§1926.32\(g\)](#) means work for construction, alteration, and/or repair, including painting and decorating. These terms are also discussed in [§1926.13](#). If any question arises as to whether an activity is deemed to be construction for purposes of the Act, the Director of the Directorate of Construction shall be consulted.

3. **Employer Worksite.**

- a. Inspections of employers in the construction industry are not easily separable into distinct worksites. The worksite is generally the site where the construction is being performed (e.g., the building site, the dam site). Where the construction site extends over a large geographical area (e.g., road building), the entire job will be considered a single worksite. In cases when such large geographical areas overlap between Area Offices, generally only operations of the employer within the

jurisdiction of any Area Office will be considered as the worksite of the employer.

- b. When a construction worksite extends beyond a single Area Office and the CSHO believes that the inspection should be extended, the affected Area Directors shall consult with each other and take appropriate action.

4. **Upon Entering the Workplace.**

- a. CSHOs shall ascertain whether there is a representative of a Federal contracting agency at the worksite. If so, they shall contact the representative, advise him/her of the inspection and request that they attend the opening conference.
- b. If the inspection is being conducted as a result of a complaint, a copy of the complaint is to be furnished to the general contractor and any affected sub-contractors.

5. **Closing Conference.**

Upon completion of the inspection, the CSHO shall confer with the general contractors and all appropriate subcontractors or their representatives, together or separately, and advise each one of all the apparent violations disclosed by the inspection to which each one's employees were exposed, or violations which the employer created or controlled. Employee representatives participating in the inspection shall also be afforded the right to participate in the closing conference(s).

C. **Federal Agency Inspections.**

Policies and procedures for Federal agencies are to be the same as those followed in the private sector. See [FAP 01-00-003](#), *Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs*, dated May 17, 1996, for additional guidance.

\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

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\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

This document is presented here as historical content, for research and review purposes only.

## Chapter 4

### VIOLATIONS

#### I. Basis of Violations.

##### A. Standards and Regulations.

1. [Section 5\(a\)\(2\)](#) of the Act states that each employer has a responsibility to comply with occupational safety and health standards promulgated under the Act, which includes standards incorporated by reference. For example, the American National Standard Institute (ANSI) standard A92.2 – 1969, “Vehicle Mounted Elevating and Rotating Work Platforms,” including appendix, is incorporated by reference as specified in [§1910.67](#). Only the mandatory provisions, i.e., those containing the word “shall” or other mandatory language of standards incorporated by reference, are adopted as standards under the Act.
2. The specific standards and regulations are found in Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1900 series. Subparts A and B of 29 CFR 1910 specifically establish the source of all the standards, which serve as the basis of violations. Standards are subdivided as follows per the preferred Federal Register nomenclature:

Subdivision Naming Convention	Example
Title	29
Part	1910
Subpart	D
Section	1910.23
Paragraph	1910.23(c)
Paragraph	1910.23(c)(1)
Paragraph	1910.23(c)(1)(i)

*NOTE: The most specific provision of a standard shall be used for citing violations.*

3. **Definition and Application of Vertical and Horizontal Standards.**

Vertical standards are standards that apply to a particular industry or to particular operations, practices, conditions, processes, means, methods, equipment, or installations. Horizontal standards are

other (more general) standards applicable to multiple industries. See [§1910.5\(c\)](#).

4. **Application of Horizontal and Vertical Standards.**

If a CSHO is uncertain whether to cite under a horizontal or a vertical standard when both may be applicable, the supervisor or the Area Director shall be consulted. The following guidelines shall be considered:

- a. When a hazard in a particular industry is covered by both a vertical (e.g., [29 CFR 1915](#)) and a horizontal (e.g., [29 CFR 1910](#)) standard, the vertical standard shall take precedence even if the horizontal standard is more stringent.
- b. In situations covered by both a horizontal (general) and a vertical (specific) standard where the horizontal standard appears to offer greater protection, the horizontal (general) standard may be cited only if its requirements are not inconsistent or in conflict with the requirements of the vertical (specific) standard. To determine whether there is a conflict or inconsistency between the standards, an analysis of the intent of the two standards must be performed. For the horizontal standard to apply, the analysis must show that the vertical standard does not address the precise hazard involved, even though it may address related or similar hazards.

**EXAMPLE 4-1:** When employees are connecting structural steel, [§1926.501\(b\)\(15\)](#) may not be cited for fall hazards above 6 feet since that specific situation is covered by [§1926.760\(b\)\(1\)](#) for fall distances of more than 30 feet.

- c. If the particular industry does not have a vertical standard that covers the hazard, then the CSHO shall use the horizontal (general industry) standard.
- d. When determining whether a horizontal or a vertical standard is applicable to a work situation, the CSHO shall focus attention on the particular activity an employer is engaged in rather than on the nature of the employer's general business.
- e. Hazards found in construction work that are not covered by a specific [29 CFR 1926](#) standard shall not normally be cited under [29 CFR 1910](#) unless that standard has been identified as being applicable to construction. See Incorporation of General

Industry Safety and Health Standards Applicable to Construction Work, [58 FR 35076](#) (June 30, 1993).

- f. If a question arises as to whether an activity is deemed construction for purposes of the Act, contact the Directorate of Construction (DOC). See [§1910.12](#), Construction Work.

5. **Violation of Variances.**

The employer's requirement to comply with a standard may be modified through granting of a variance, as outlined in [Section 6\(d\)](#) of the Act.

- a. In the event that the employer is not in compliance with the requirements of the variance, a violation of the controlling standard shall be cited with a reference in the citation to the variance provision that has not been met.
- b. If, during an inspection, CSHOs discover that an employer has filed a variance application regarding a condition that is an apparent violation of a standard, the Area Director or designee shall determine whether the variance request has been granted. If the variance has not been granted, a citation for the violative condition may be issued.

B. **Employee Exposure.**

A hazardous condition that violates an OSHA standard or the general duty clause shall be cited only when employee exposure can be documented. The exposure(s) must have occurred within the six months immediately preceding the issuance of the citation to serve as a basis for a violation, except where the employer has concealed the violative condition or misled OSHA, in which case the citation must be issued within six months from the date when OSHA learns, or should have known, of the condition. The RSOL should be consulted in such cases.

1. **Determination of Employer/Employee Relationship.**

Whether or not exposed persons are employees of a particular employer depends on several factors, the most important of which is who controls the manner in which employees perform their assigned work. The question of who pays these employees may not be the key factor. Determining the employer of exposed employees may be a complex issue, in which case the Area Director shall seek the advice of the RSOL.

2. **Proximity to the Hazard.**

The actual and/or potential proximity of the employees to a hazard shall be thoroughly documented. (i.e., photos, measurements, employee interviews).

3. **Observed Exposure.**

- a. Employee exposure is established if CSHOs witness, observe, or monitor the proximity or access of an employee to the hazard or potentially hazardous condition.
- b. The use of personal protective equipment may not, in itself, adequately prevent employee exposures to a hazardous condition. Such exposures may be cited where the applicable standard requires the additional use of engineering and/or administrative (including work practice) controls, or where the personal protective equipment used is inadequate.

4. **Unobserved Exposure.**

Where employee exposure is not observed, witnessed, or monitored by CSHOs, employee exposure may be established through witness statements or other evidence that exposure to a hazardous condition has occurred or may continue to occur.

a. **Past Exposure.**

In fatality/catastrophe (or other “accident/incident”) investigations, prior employee exposure(s) may be established if CSHOs establish, through written statements or other evidence, that exposure(s) to a hazardous condition occurred at the time of the accident/incident. Additionally, prior exposures may serve as the basis for a violation when:

- The hazardous condition continues to exist, or it is reasonably predictable that the same or similar condition could recur;
- It is reasonably predictable that employee exposure to a hazardous condition could recur when:
  - The employee exposure has occurred in the previous six months;



- The hazardous condition is an integral part of an employer's normal operations; and
- The employer has not established a policy or program to ensure that exposure to the hazardous condition will not recur.

**b. Potential Exposure.**

Potential exposure to a hazardous condition may be established if there is evidence that employees have access to the hazard, and may include one or more of the following:

- When a hazard has existed and could recur because of work patterns, circumstances, or anticipated work requirements;
- When a hazard would pose a danger to employees simply by their presence in an area and it is reasonably predictable that they could come into that area during the course of the work, to rest or to eat, or to enter or exit from an assigned work area; or
- When a hazard is associated with the use of unsafe machinery or equipment or arises from the presence of hazardous materials and it is reasonably predictable that an employee could again use the equipment or be exposed to the materials in the course of work; *however*
- If the inspection reveals an adequately communicated *and* effectively enforced safety policy or program that would prevent or minimize employee exposure, including accidental exposure to the hazardous condition, it would not be reasonably predictable that employee exposure could occur. In such circumstances, no citation should be issued in relation to the condition.

**c. Documenting Employee Exposure.**

CSHOs shall thoroughly document exposure, both observed and unobserved, for each potential violation. This includes:

- Statements by the exposed employees, the employer (particularly the immediate supervisor of the exposed employee), other witnesses (other employees who have observed exposure to the hazardous condition), union

representatives, engineering personnel, management, or members of the exposed employee's family;

- Recorded statements or signed written statements;
- Photographs, videotapes, and/or measurements; and
- All relevant documents (e.g., autopsy reports, police reports, job specifications, site plans, OSHA-300/301, equipment manuals, employer work rules, employer sampling results, employer safety and health programs, and employer disciplinary policies, etc.).

**C. Regulatory Requirements.**

Violations of 29 CFR [Part 1903](#) and [Part 1904](#) shall be documented and cited when an employer does not comply with posting, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements of the regulations contained in these parts as provided by agency policy. See also [CPL 02-00-111](#), *Citation Policy for Paperwork and Written Program Violations*, dated November 27, 1995.

*NOTE: If prior to the lapse of the 8-hour reporting period, the Area Director becomes aware of an incident required to be reported under [§1904.39](#) through means other than an employer report, there is no violation for failure to report.*

**D. Hazard Communication.**

[Section 1910.1200](#) requires chemical manufacturers and importers to assess the hazards of chemicals they produce or import, and applies to these employers even though they may not have their own employees exposed. Violations of this standard by manufacturers or importers shall be documented and cited, irrespective of any employee exposure at the manufacturing or importing location. See [CPL 02-02-038](#), *Inspection Procedures for the Hazard Communication Standard*, dated March 20, 1998.

**E. Employer/Employee Responsibilities.**

**1. Employer Responsibilities.**

[Section 5\(a\)](#) of the Act states: “Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees.” This

section also states “The employer shall comply with occupational safety and health standards promulgated under this Act.”

2. **Employee Responsibilities.**

- a. [Section 5\(b\)](#) of the Act states: “Each employee shall comply with occupational safety and health standards and all rules, regulations, and orders issued pursuant to the Act which are applicable to his own actions and conduct.” The Act does not provide for the issuance of citations or the proposal of penalties against employees. Employers are responsible for employee compliance with the standards.
- b. In cases where the CSHO determines that employees are systematically refusing to comply with a standard applicable to their own actions and conduct, the matter shall be referred to the Area Director who shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee.
- c. The CSHO is expected to obtain information to ascertain whether the employer is exercising appropriate oversight of the workplace to ensure compliance with the Act. Concerted refusals by employees to comply will not ordinarily bar the issuance of a citation where the employer has failed to exercise its authority to adequately supervise employees, including taking appropriate disciplinary action.

3. **Affirmative Defenses.**

An affirmative defense is a claim which, if established by the employer, will excuse it from a violation which has otherwise been documented by the CSHO. Although affirmative defenses must be proved by the employer at the time of the hearing, CSHOs should preliminarily gather evidence to rebut an employer’s potential argument supporting any such defenses. See [Chapter 5, Section VI, \*Affirmative Defenses\*](#), for additional information.

4. **Multi-Employer Worksites.**

On multi-employer worksites in all industry sectors, more than one employer may be cited for a hazardous condition that violates an OSHA standard. For specific and detailed guidance, see the multi-employer policy contained in [CPL 02-00-124, \*Multi-Employer Citation Policy\*](#), dated December 10, 1999.

## II. Serious Violations.

### A. Section 17(k).

[Section 17\(k\)](#) of the Act provides that “a serious violation shall be deemed to exist in a place of employment if there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a condition which exists, or from one or more practices, means, methods, operations, or processes which have been adopted or are in use, in such place of employment unless the employer did not, and could not with the exercise of reasonable diligence, know of the presence of the violation.”

### B. Establishing Serious Violations.

1. CSHOs shall consider four factors in determining whether a violation is to be classified as serious. The first three factors address whether there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from an accident/incident or exposure relating to the violative condition. The **probability** that an incident or illness will occur is not to be considered in determining whether a violation is serious, but is considered in determining the relative gravity of the violation. The fourth factor addresses whether the employer knew or could have known of the violative condition.
2. The classification of a violation need not be completed for each instance. It should be done once for each citation or, if violation items are grouped in a citation, once for the group.
3. If the citation consists of multiple instances or grouped violations, the overall classification shall normally be based on the most serious item.
4. The four-factor analysis outlined below shall be followed in making the determination whether a violation is serious. Potential violations of the general duty clause shall also be evaluated on the basis of these steps to establish whether they may cause death or serious physical harm.

### C. Four Steps to be Documented.

#### 1. Type of Hazardous Exposure(s).

The first step is to identify the type of potential exposures to a hazard that the violated standard or the general duty clause is designed to prevent.

- a. CSHOs need not establish the exact manner in which an exposure to a hazard could occur. However, CSHOs shall note all facts which could affect the probability of an injury or illness **resulting** from a potential accident or hazardous exposure.
- b. If more than one type of hazardous exposure exists, CSHOs shall determine which hazard could reasonably be predicted to result in the most severe injury or illness and shall base the classification of the violation on that hazard.
- c. The following are examples of some types of hazardous exposures that a standard is designed to prevent:

**EXAMPLE 4-2:** Employees are observed working at the unguarded edge of an open-sided floor 30 feet above the ground in apparent violation of [§1926.501\(b\)\(1\)](#). The regulation requires that the edge of the open-sided floor be guarded by standard guardrail systems. The type of hazard the standard is designed to prevent is a fall from the edge of the floor to the ground below.

**EXAMPLE 4-3:** Employees are observed working in an area in which debris is located in apparent violation of [§1915.91\(b\)](#). The type of hazard the standard is designed to prevent here is employees tripping on debris.

**EXAMPLE 4-4:** An 8-hour time-weighted average sample reveals regular, ongoing employee overexposure to methylene chloride at 100 ppm in apparent violation of [§1910.1052](#). This is 75 ppm above the PEL mandated by the standard.

## 2. **The Type of Injury or Illness.**

The second step is to identify the most serious injury or illness that could reasonably be expected to result from the potential hazardous exposure identified in Step 1.

- a. In making this determination, CSHOs shall consider all factors that would affect the severity of the injury or illness that could reasonably result from the exposure to the hazard. CSHOs shall not give consideration at this point to factors relating to the **probability** that an injury or illness will occur.

- b. The following are examples of types of injuries that could reasonably be predicted to result from exposure to a particular hazard:

**EXAMPLE 4-5:** If an employee falls from the edge of an open-sided floor 30 feet to the ground below, the employee could die, break bones, suffer a concussion, or experience other serious injuries that would substantially impair a body function.

**EXAMPLE 4-6:** If an employee trips on debris, the trip may cause abrasions or bruises, but it is only marginally predictable that the employee could suffer a substantial impairment of a bodily function. If, however, the area is littered with broken glass or other sharp objects, it is reasonably predictable that an employee who tripped on debris could suffer deep cuts which could require suturing.

- c. For conditions involving exposure to air contaminants or harmful physical agents, the CSHO shall consider the concentration levels of the contaminant or physical agent in determining the types of illness that could reasonably result from the exposure. [CPL 02-02-043](#), *The Chemical Information Manual*, dated July 1, 1991, shall be used to determine both toxicological properties of substances listed and a Health Code Number.
- d. In order to support a classification of serious, a determination must be made that exposure(s) at the sampled level could lead to illness. Thus, CSHOs must document all evidence demonstrating that the sampled exposure(s) is representative of employee exposure(s) under normal working conditions, including identifying and recording the frequency and duration of employee exposure(s). Evidence to be considered includes:
- The nature of the operation from which the exposure results;
  - Whether the exposure is regular and on-going or is of limited frequency and duration;
  - How long employees have worked at the operation in the past;

- Whether employees are performing functions which can be expected to continue; and
  - Whether work practices, engineering controls, production levels, and other operating parameters are typical of normal operations.
- e. Where such evidence is difficult to obtain or inconclusive, CSHOs shall estimate frequency and duration of exposures from any evidence available. In general, if it is reasonable to infer that regular, ongoing exposures could occur, CSHOs shall consider such potential exposures in determining the types of illness that could result from the violative condition. The following are some examples of illnesses that could reasonably result from exposure to a health hazard:

**EXAMPLE 4-7:** If an employee is exposed regularly to methylene chloride at 100 ppm, it is reasonable to predict that cancer could result.

**EXAMPLE 4-8:** If an employee is exposed regularly to acetic acid at 20 ppm, it is reasonable that the resulting illnesses would be irritation to eyes, nose and throat, or occupational asthma with chronic rhinitis and sinusitis.

### 3. **Potential for Death or Serious Physical Harm.**

The third step is to determine whether the type of injury or illness identified in Step 2 could include death or a form of serious physical harm. In making this determination, the CSHO shall utilize the following definition of “serious physical harm:”

*Impairment of the body in which part of the body is made functionally useless or is substantially reduced in efficiency on or off the job. Such impairment may be permanent or temporary, chronic or acute. Injuries involving such impairment would usually require treatment by a medical doctor or other licensed health care professional.*

- a. Injuries that constitute serious physical harm include, but are not limited, to:
- Amputations (loss of all or part of a bodily appendage);

- Concussion;
  - Crushing (internal, even though skin surface may be intact);
  - Fractures (simple or compound);
  - Burns or scalds, including electric and chemical burns;
  - Cuts, lacerations, or punctures involving significant bleeding and/or requiring suturing;
  - Sprains and strains; and
  - Musculoskeletal disorders.
- b. Illnesses that constitute serious physical harm include, but are not limited, to:
- Cancer;
  - Respiratory illnesses (silicosis, asbestosis, byssinosis, etc.);
  - Hearing impairment;
  - Central nervous system impairment;
  - Visual impairment; and
  - Poisoning.
- c. The following are examples of injuries or illnesses that could reasonably result from an accident/incident or exposure and lead to death or serious physical harm:

**EXAMPLE 4-9:** If an employee falls 15 feet to the ground, suffers broken bones or a concussion, and experiences substantial impairment of a part of the body requiring treatment by a medical doctor, the injury would constitute serious physical harm.

**EXAMPLE 4-10:** If an employee trips on debris and because of the presence of sharp debris or equipment suffers a deep cut to the hand requiring suturing, the use of



the hand could be substantially reduced. This injury would be classified as serious.

**EXAMPLE 4-11:** An employee develops chronic beryllium disease after long-term exposure to beryllium at a concentration in air of 0.004 mg/m<sup>3</sup>, and his or her breathing capacity is significantly reduced. This illness would constitute serious physical harm.

*NOTE: The key determination is the likelihood that death or serious harm will result **IF** an accident or exposure occurs. The likelihood of an accident occurring is addressed in penalty assessments and not by the classification.*

#### 4. **Knowledge of Hazardous Condition.**

The fourth step is to determine whether the employer knew or, with the exercise of reasonable diligence, could have known, of the presence of the **hazardous condition**.

- a. The knowledge requirement is met if it is established that the employer actually knew of the hazardous condition constituting the apparent violation. Examples include the employer saw the condition, an employee or employee representative reported it to the employer, or an employee was previously injured by the condition and the employer knew of the injury. CSHOs shall record any/all evidence that establishes employer knowledge of the condition or practice.
- b. If it cannot be determined that the employer has actual knowledge of a hazardous condition, the knowledge requirement may be established if there is evidence that the employer could have known of it through the exercise of reasonable diligence. CSHOs shall record any evidence that substantiates that the employer could have known of the hazardous condition. Examples of such evidence include:
  - The violation/hazard was in plain view and obvious;
  - The duration of the hazardous condition was not brief;
  - The employer failed to regularly inspect the workplace for readily identifiable hazards; and

- The employer failed to train and supervise employees regarding the particular hazard.
- c. The actual or constructive knowledge of a supervisor who is aware of a violative condition or practice can usually be imputed to the employer for purposes of establishing knowledge. In cases where the employer contends that the supervisor's own conduct constituted an isolated event of employee misconduct, the CSHO shall attempt to determine whether the supervisor violated an established work rule, and the extent to which the supervisor was trained in the rule and supervised regarding compliance to prevent such conduct.

### III. General Duty Requirements.

[Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) of the Act requires that “Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees.” The general duty requirement also exists for federal agencies. See [§1960.8](#).

#### A. Evaluation of General Duty Requirements.

In general, Review Commission and court precedent have established that the following elements are necessary to prove a violation of the general duty clause:

- ▶ The employer failed to keep the workplace free of a hazard to which employees of that employer were exposed;
- ▶ The hazard was recognized;
- ▶ The hazard was causing or was likely to cause death or serious physical harm; and
- ▶ There was a feasible and useful method to correct the hazard.

A general duty citation must involve both the presence of a serious hazard and exposure of the cited employer's **own** employees.

B. **Elements of a General Duty Requirement Violation.**

1. **Definition of a Hazard.**

- a. The hazard in a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation is a *workplace condition* or practice to which employees are exposed, creating the *potential for death or serious physical harm* to employees.
- b. These conditions or practices must be **clearly stated in a citation** so as to apprise employers of their obligations and must be ones the employer can reasonably be expected to prevent. The hazard must therefore be defined in terms of the **presence of hazardous conditions or** practices that present a particular danger to employees.

2. **Do Not Cite the Lack of a Particular Abatement Method.**

- a. General duty clause citations are not intended to allege that the violation is a failure to implement certain precautions, corrective actions, or other abatement measures but rather addresses the failure to prevent or remove a particular hazard. [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) therefore does not mandate a particular abatement measure but only requires an employer to render the workplace free of recognized hazards by any feasible and effective means the employer wishes to utilize.
- b. In situations where a question arises regarding distinguishing between a dangerous workplace condition or practice and the lack of an abatement method, the Area Director shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee, or RSOL for assistance in correctly identifying the hazard.

**EXAMPLE 4-12:** Employees are conducting sanding operations that create sparks in the proximity of magnesium dust (workplace condition or practice) exposing them to the serious injury of burns from a fire (potential for physical harm). One proposed method of abatement may be engineering controls such as adequate ventilation. The “hazard” is sanding that creates sparks in the presence of magnesium that may result in a fire capable of seriously injuring employees, not the lack of adequate ventilation.

**EXAMPLE 4-13:** Employees are operating tools that generate sparks in the presence of an ignitable gas (workplace condition) exposing them to the danger of an explosion (physical harm). The hazard is use of tools that

create sparks in a volatile atmosphere that may cause an explosion capable of seriously injuring employees, not the lack of approved equipment.

**EXAMPLE 4-14:** In a workplace situation involving high-pressure machinery that vents gases next to a work area where the employer has not installed proper high-pressure equipment, has improperly installed the equipment that is in place, and does not have adequate work rules addressing the dangers of high pressure gas, there are three abatement measures the employer has failed to take. However, there is only one hazard (i.e., employee exposure to the venting of high-pressure gases into a work area that may cause serious burns from steam discharges).

3. **The Hazard is Not a Particular Accident/Incident.**

- a. The occurrence of an accident/incident does not necessarily mean that the employer has violated [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#), although the accident/incident may be evidence of a hazard. In some cases a Section 5(a)(1) violation may be unrelated to the cause of the accident/incident. Although accident/incident facts may be relevant and shall be documented, the citation shall address the **hazard in the workplace that existed prior to the accident/incident**, not the particular facts that led to the occurrence of the accident/incident.

**EXAMPLE 4-15:** A fire occurred in a workplace where flammable materials were present. No one was injured by the fire but an employee, disregarding the clear instructions of his supervisor to use an available exit, jumped out of a window and broke a leg. The danger of fire due to the presence of flammable materials may be a recognized hazard causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm, but the action of the employee may be an instance of unpreventable employee misconduct. The citation must address the underlying workplace fire hazard, not the accident/incident involving the employee.

4. **The Hazard Must be Reasonably Foreseeable.**

The hazard for which a citation is issued must be reasonably foreseeable. All of the factors that could cause a hazard need not be present in the same place or at the same time in order to prove foreseeability of the hazard; e.g., an explosion need not be imminent.

**EXAMPLE 4-16:** If combustible gas and oxygen are present in sufficient quantities in a confined area to cause an explosion if ignited, but no ignition source is present or could be present, no [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation would exist. However, if the employer has not taken sufficient safety precautions to preclude the presence or use of ignition sources in the confined area, then a foreseeable hazard may exist.

*NOTE: It is necessary to establish the reasonable foreseeability of the workplace hazard, rather than the particular circumstances that led to an accident/incident.*

**EXAMPLE 4-17:** A titanium dust fire spreads from one room to another because an open can of gasoline was in the second room. An employee who usually worked in both rooms is burned in the second room as a result of the gasoline igniting. The presence of gasoline in the second room may be a rare occurrence. However, it is not necessary to demonstrate that a fire in both rooms could reasonably occur, but only that a fire hazard, in this case due to the presence of titanium dust, was reasonably foreseeable.

5. **The Hazard Must Affect the Cited Employer's Employees.**
  - a. The employees exposed to the [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) hazard must be the employees of the cited employer. An employer who may have created, contributed to, and/or controlled the hazard normally shall not be cited for a Section 5(a)(1) violation if his own employees are not exposed to the hazard.
  - b. In complex situations, such as multi-employer worksites, where it may be difficult to identify the precise employment relationship between the employer to be cited and the exposed employees, the Area Director shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee and the RSOL to determine the sufficiency of the evidence regarding the employment relationship.
  - c. The fact that an employer denies that exposed workers are his/her employees is not necessarily determinative of the employment relationship issue. Whether or not exposed persons are employees of an employer depends on several factors, the most important of which is who controls the manner in which the employees perform their assigned work.

The question of who pays employees in and of itself may not be the determining factor to establish a relationship.

6. **The Hazard Must Be Recognized.**

Recognition of a hazard can be established on the basis of employer recognition, industry recognition, or “common-sense” recognition. The use of common sense as the basis for establishing recognition shall be limited to special circumstances. Recognition of the hazard must be supported by the following evidence and adequate documentation in the file:

a. **Employer Recognition.**

- A recognized hazard can be established by evidence of actual employer knowledge of a hazardous condition or practice. Evidence of employer recognition may consist of written or oral statements made by the employer or other management or supervisory personnel during or before the OSHA inspection.
- Employer awareness of a hazard may also be demonstrated by a review of company memorandums, safety work rules that specifically identify a hazard, operations manuals, standard operating procedures, and collective bargaining agreements. In addition, prior accidents/incidents, near misses known to the employer, injury and illness reports, or workers' compensation data, may also show employer knowledge of a hazard.
- Employer awareness of a hazard may also be demonstrated by prior Federal OSHA or OSHA State Plan State inspection history which involved the same hazard.
- Employee complaints or grievances and safety committee reports to supervisory personnel may establish recognition of the hazard, but the evidence should show that the complaints were not merely infrequent, off-hand comments.
- An employer's own corrective actions may serve as the basis for establishing employer recognition of the hazard if the employer did not adequately continue or maintain the corrective action or if the corrective action did not afford effective protection to the employees.

*NOTE: CSHOs are to gather as many of these facts as possible to support establishing a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation.*

**b. Industry Recognition.**

- A hazard is recognized if the employer's relevant industry is aware of its existence. Recognition by an industry other than the industry to which the employer belongs is generally insufficient to prove this element of a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation. Although evidence of recognition by an employer's similar operations within an industry is preferred, evidence that the employer's overall industry recognizes the hazard may be sufficient. The Area Director shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee on this issue. Industry recognition of a hazard can be established in several ways:
  - Statements by safety or health experts who are familiar with the relevant conditions in industry (regardless of whether they work in the industry);
  - Evidence of implementation of abatement methods to deal with the particular hazard by other members of the industry;
  - Manufacturers' warnings on equipment or in literature that are relevant to the hazard;
  - Statistical or empirical studies conducted by the employer's industry that demonstrate awareness of the hazard. Evidence such as studies conducted by the employee representatives, the union or other employees must also be considered if the employer or the industry has been made aware of them;
  - Government and insurance industry studies, if the employer or the employer's industry is familiar with the studies and recognizes their validity;

- State and local laws or regulations that apply in the jurisdiction where the violation is alleged to have occurred and which currently are enforced against the industry in question. In such cases, however, corroborating evidence of recognition is recommended; and/or
- If the relevant industry participated in the committees drafting national consensus standards such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and other private standard-setting organizations, this can constitute industry recognition. Otherwise, such private standards normally shall be used only as corroborating evidence of recognition. Preambles to these standards that discuss the hazards involved may show hazard recognition as much as, or more than, the actual standards. However, these private standards **cannot** be enforced as OSHA standards, but they may be used to provide evidence of industry recognition, seriousness of the hazard or feasibility of abatement methods.
- In cases where State and local government agencies have codes or regulations covering hazards not addressed by OSHA standards, the Area Director, upon consultation with the Regional Administrator or designee, shall determine whether the hazard is to be cited under [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) or referred to the appropriate local agency for enforcement.

**EXAMPLE 4-18:** A safety hazard on a personnel elevator in a factory is documented during an inspection. It is determined that the hazard may not be cited under [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#), but there is a local code that addresses this hazard and a local agency actively enforces the code. The situation normally shall be referred to the local enforcement agency in lieu of citing 5(a)(1).

- References that may be used to supplement other evidence to help demonstrate industry recognition include the following:



- NIOSH criteria documents.
- EPA publications.
- National Cancer Institute and other agency publications.
- OSHA Hazard Alerts.
- OSHA Technical Manual.

c. **Common Sense Recognition.**

If industry or employer recognition of the hazard cannot be established in accordance with (a) and (b), hazard recognition can still be established if a hazardous condition is so obvious that any reasonable person would have recognized it. This form of recognition should only be used in flagrant or obvious cases.

**EXAMPLE 4-19:** In a general industry situation, courts have held that any reasonable person would recognize that it is hazardous to use an unenclosed chute to dump bricks into an alleyway 26 feet below where unwarned employees worked. In construction, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) could not be cited in this situation because [§1926.252](#) or [§1926.852](#) applies. In the context of a chemical processing plant, common sense recognition was established where hazardous substances were being vented into a work area.

7. **The Hazard Was Causing or Likely to Cause Death or Serious Physical Harm.**

- a. This element of a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation is virtually identical to the substantial probability element of a serious violation under [Section 17\(k\)](#) of the Act. Serious physical harm is defined in [Paragraph II.C.3.](#) of this chapter.
- b. This element of a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation can be established by showing that:
  - An actual death or serious injury resulted from the recognized hazard, whether immediately prior to the inspection or at other times and places; or

- If an accident/incident occurred, the likely result would be death or serious physical harm.

**EXAMPLE 4-20:** An employee is standing at the edge of an unguarded floor 25 feet above the ground. If a fall occurred, death or serious physical harm (e.g., broken bones) is likely to result.

- c. In the health context, establishing serious physical harm at the cited levels may be challenging if the potential for illness/harm requires the passage of a substantial period of time. In such cases, expert testimony is crucial to establish there is probability that long-term serious physical harm will occur. It will generally be less difficult to establish this element for acute illnesses, since the immediacy of the effects will make the causal relationship clearer. In general, the following must be shown to establish that the hazard causes, or is likely to cause, death or serious physical harm when such illness or death will occur only after the passage of time:

- Regular and continuing employee exposure at the workplace to the toxic substance at the measured levels could reasonably occur;
- An illness reasonably could result from such regular and continuing employee exposures; and
- If illness does occur, its likely result is death or serious physical harm.

8. **The Hazard May be Corrected by a Feasible and Useful Method.**

- a. To establish a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation, the agency must also identify the existence of a measure(s) that is feasible, available, and likely to correct the hazard. Evidence regarding feasible abatement measures shall indicate that the recognized hazard, rather than a particular accident/incident, is preventable.
- b. If the proposed abatement method would eliminate or significantly reduce the hazard beyond whatever measures the employer may be taking, a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation may be issued. A citation will not be issued merely because the agency is aware of an abatement method different from that of the employer, if the proposed method would not reduce the hazard significantly more than the employer's method. In some cases,

only a series of abatement methods will materially reduce a hazard and then all potential abatement methods shall be listed. For example, an abatement note shall be included on the OSHA-1b and -2 such as “Among other methods, one feasible and acceptable means of abatement would be to \_\_\_\_.” (Fill in the blank with the specified abatement recommendation.)

c. Examples of such feasible and acceptable means of abatement include, but are not limited, to:

- The employer's own abatement method,/ which existed prior to the inspection but was not implemented;
- The implementation of feasible abatement measures by the employer after the accident/incident or inspection;
- The implementation of abatement measures by other employers/companies; and
- Recommendations made by the manufacturer addressing safety measures for the hazardous equipment involved, as well as suggested abatement methods contained in trade journals, national consensus standards and individual employer work rules. National consensus standards shall not solely be relied on to mandate specific abatement methods.

**EXAMPLE 4-21:** An ANSI standard addresses the hazard of exposure to hydrogen sulfide gas and refers to various abatement methods, such as the prevention of the buildup of materials that create the gas and the provision of ventilation. The ANSI standard may be used as general evidence of the existence of feasible abatement measures.

In this example, the citation shall state that the recognized hazard of exposure to hydrogen sulfide gas was present in the workplace and that a feasible and useful abatement method existed; e.g., preventing the buildup of gas by providing an adequate ventilation system. It would not be correct to base the citation on the employer's failure to prevent the buildup of materials that could create the gas and to provide a ventilation system as both of these are abatement methods, not recognized hazards.

- d. Evidence provided by expert witnesses may be used to demonstrate feasibility of abatement methods. In addition, although it is not necessary to establish that an industry recognizes a particular abatement measure, such evidence may be used if available.

C. **Use of the General Duty Clause.**

1. The general duty clause shall be used only where there is no standard that applies to the particular hazard and in situations where a recognized hazard is created in whole or in part by conditions not covered by a standard. See [§1910.5\(f\)](#).

**EXAMPLE 4-22:** A hazard covered only partially by a standard would be construction employees exposed to a collapse hazard because of a failure to properly install reinforcing steel. Construction standards contain requirements for reinforcing steel in wall, piers, columns, and similar vertical structures, but do not contain requirements for steel placement in horizontal planes, e.g., a concrete floor. A failure to properly install reinforcing steel in a floor in accordance with industry standards and/or structural drawings could be cited under the general duty clause.

**EXAMPLE 4-23:** The powered industrial truck standard at [§1910.178](#) does not address all potential hazards associated with forklift use. For instance, while that standard deals with the hazards associated with a forklift operator leaving his vehicle unattended or dismounting the vehicle and working in its vicinity, it does not contain requirements for the use of operator restraint systems. An employer's failure to address the hazard of a tipover (forklifts are particularly susceptible to tipovers) by requiring operators of powered industrial trucks equipped with restraint devices or seat belts to use those devices could be cited under the general duty clause. See [CPL 02-01-028](#), *Compliance Assistance for the Powered Industrial Truck Operator Training Standards*, dated November 30, 2000, for additional guidance.

2. The general duty clause may also be applicable to some types of employment that are inherently dangerous (fire brigades, emergency rescue operations, confined space entry, etc.).
  - a. Employers involved in such occupations must take the necessary steps to eliminate or minimize employee exposure to all recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious

physical harm. These steps include an assessment of hazards that may be encountered, providing appropriate protective equipment, and any training, instruction, or necessary equipment.

- b. An employer, who has failed to take such steps and allows its employees to be exposed to a hazard, may be cited under the general duty clause.

**D. Limitations of Use of the General Duty Clause.**

[Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) is to be used only within the guidelines given in this chapter.

**1. Section 5(a)(1) Shall Not be Used When a Standard Applies to a Hazard.**

As discussed above, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) may not be cited if an OSHA standard applies to the hazardous working condition. If there is a question as to whether a standard applies, the Area Director shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee. The RSOL will assist the Regional Administrator or designee in determining the applicability of a standard prior to the issuance of a citation.

**EXAMPLE 4-24:** [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) shall not be cited for electrical hazards as [§1910.303\(b\)](#) and [§1926.403\(b\)](#) require that electrical equipment is to be kept free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees.

**2. Section 5(a)(1) Shall Normally Not be Used to Impose a Stricter Requirement than that Required by the Standard.**

**EXAMPLE 4-25:** A standard provides for a permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 5 ppm. Even if data establish that a 3 ppm level is a recognized hazard, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) shall not be cited to require that the lower level be achieved. If the standard has only a time-weighted average permissible exposure level and the hazard involves exposure above a recognized ceiling level, the Area Director shall consult with the Regional Administrator or designee, who shall discuss any proposed citation with the RSOL.

*NOTE: An exception to this rule may apply if it can be proven that "an employer knows a particular safety or health standard is inadequate to protect his employees against the specific*

*hazard it is intended to address.” See, Int. Union UAW v. General Dynamics Land Systems Division, 815 F.2d 1570 (D.C. Cir. 1987). Such cases shall be subject to pre-citation review.*

3. **Section 5(a)(1) Shall Normally Not be Used to Require Additional Abatement Methods not Set Forth in an Existing Standard.**

If a toxic substance standard covers engineering control requirements but not requirements for medical surveillance, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) shall not be cited to additionally require medical surveillance. Area Directors shall evaluate the circumstances of special situations in accord with guidelines stated herein and consult with the Regional Administrator or designee to determine whether a 5(a)(1) citation can be issued in those special cases.

4. **Alternative Standards.**

The following standards shall be considered carefully before issuing a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation for a health hazard.

- a. There are a number of general standards that shall be considered rather than [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) in situations where the hazard is not covered by a particular standard. If a hazard not covered by a specific standard can be substantially corrected by compliance with a personal protective equipment (PPE) standard, the PPE standard shall be cited. In general industry, [§1910.132\(a\)](#) may be appropriate where exposure to a hazard may be prevented by the wearing of PPE.
- b. For a health hazard, the particular toxic substance standard, such as asbestos and coke oven emissions, shall be cited where appropriate. If those particular standards do not apply, however, other standards may be applicable; e.g., the air contaminant levels contained in [§1910.1000](#) in general industry and in [§1926.55](#) for construction.
- c. Another general standard is [§1910.134\(a\)](#), which addresses the hazards of breathing harmful air contaminants not covered under [§1910.1000](#) or another specific standard, and which may be cited for failure to use feasible engineering controls or respirators.
- d. Violations of [§1910.141\(g\)\(2\)](#) may be cited when employees are allowed to consume food or beverages in an area exposed

to a toxic material, and [§1910.132\(a\)](#) where there is a potential for toxic materials to be absorbed through the skin.

E. **Classification of Violations Cited Under the General Duty Clause.**

Only hazards presenting serious physical harm or death may be cited under the general duty clause (including willful and/or repeated violations that would otherwise qualify as serious violations). Other-than-serious citations shall not be issued for general duty clause violations.

F. **Procedures for Implementation of Section 5(a)(1) Enforcement.**

To ensure that citations of the general duty clause are defensible, the following procedures shall be followed:

1. **Gathering Evidence and Preparing the File.**

- a. The evidence necessary to establish each element of a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation shall be documented in the file. This includes all photographs, videotapes, sampling data, witness statements, and other documentary and physical evidence necessary to establish the violation. Additional documentation includes evidence of specific and/or general awareness of a hazard, why it was detectable and recognized, and any supporting statements or reference materials.
- b. If copies of documents relied on to establish the various [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) elements cannot be obtained before issuing the citation, these documents shall be accurately cited and identified in the file so they can be obtained later if necessary.
- c. If experts are necessary to establish any element(s) of a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violation, such experts and RSOL shall be consulted **prior to the citation being issued** and their opinions noted in the file.

2. **Pre-Citation Review.**

The Area Director shall review and approve all proposed [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citations. These citations shall undergo additional pre-citation review as follows:

- a. The Regional Administrator or designee and RSOL shall be consulted prior to the issuance of all [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citations where complex issues or exceptions to the outlined procedures are involved; and

- b. If a standard does not apply and all criteria for issuing a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation are not met, yet the Area Director determines that the hazard warrants some type of notification, a Hazard Alert Letter shall be sent to the employer and employee representative describing the hazard and suggesting corrective action.

#### **IV. Other-than-Serious Violations.**

This type of violation shall be cited in situations where the accident/incident or illness that would be most likely result from a hazardous condition would probably not cause death or serious physical harm, but would have a direct and immediate relationship to the safety and health of employees.

#### **V. Willful Violations.**

A willful violation exists under the Act where an employer has demonstrated either an intentional disregard for the requirements of the Act or a plain indifference to employee safety and health. Area Directors are encouraged to consult with RSOL when developing willful citations. The following guidance and procedures apply whenever there is evidence that a willful violation may exist:

##### **A. Intentional Disregard Violations.**

An employer commits an intentional and knowing violation if:

1. An employer was aware of the requirements of the Act or of an applicable standard or regulation and was also aware of a condition or practice in violation of those requirements, but did not abate the hazard; or
2. An employer was not aware of the requirements of the Act or standards, but had knowledge of a comparable legal requirement (e.g., state or local law) and was also aware of a condition or practice in violation of that requirement.

*NOTE: Good faith efforts made by the employer to minimize or abate a hazard may sometimes preclude the issuance of a willful violation. In such cases, CSHOs should consult the Area Director or designee if a willful classification is under consideration.*

3. A willful citation also may be issued where an employer knows that specific steps must be taken to address a hazard, but substitutes its judgment for the requirements of the standard. See



the internal [memorandum](#) on Procedures for Significant Cases, and [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-by-Violation*, dated October 21, 1990.

**EXAMPLE 4-26:** The employer was issued repeated citations addressing the same or similar conditions, but did not take corrective action.

**B. Plain Indifference Violations.**

1. An employer commits a violation with plain indifference to employee safety and health where:
  - a. Management officials were aware of an OSHA requirement applicable to the employer's business but made little or no effort to communicate the requirement to lower level supervisors and employees.
  - b. Company officials were aware of a plainly obvious hazardous condition but made little or no effort to prevent violations from occurring.

**EXAMPLE 4-27:** The employer is aware of the existence of unguarded power presses that have caused near misses, lacerations and amputations in the past and does nothing to abate the hazard.

- c. An employer was not aware of any legal requirement, but knows that a condition or practice in the workplace is a serious hazard to the safety or health of employees and makes little or no effort to determine the extent of the problem or to take the corrective action. Knowledge of a hazard may be gained from such means as insurance company reports, safety committee or other internal reports, the occurrence of illnesses or injuries, or complaints of employees or their representatives.

*NOTE: Voluntary employer self-audits that assess workplace safety and health conditions shall not normally be used as a basis of a willful violation. However, once an employer's self-audit identifies a hazardous condition, the employer must promptly take appropriate measures to correct a violative condition and provide interim employee protection. See OSHA's Policy on Voluntary Employer Safety and Health Self-Audits (Federal Register, July 28, 2000 ([65 FR 46498](#))).*

- d. Willfulness may also be established despite lack of knowledge of a legal requirement if circumstances show that the employer would have placed no importance on such knowledge.

**EXAMPLE 4-28:** An employer sends employees into a deep unprotected excavation containing a hazardous atmosphere without ever inspecting for potential hazards.

2. It is not necessary that the violation be committed with a bad purpose or malicious intent to be deemed “willful.” It is sufficient that the violation was deliberate, voluntary or intentional as distinguished from inadvertent, accidental or ordinarily negligent.
3. CSHOs shall develop and record on the OSHA-1B all evidence that indicates employer knowledge of the requirements of a standard, and any reasons for why it disregarded statutory or other legal obligations to protect employees against a hazardous condition. Willfulness may exist if an employer is informed by employees or employee representatives regarding an alleged hazardous condition and does not make a reasonable effort to verify or correct the hazard. Additional factors to consider in determining whether to characterize a violation as willful include:
  - a. The nature of the employer's business and the knowledge regarding safety and health matters that could reasonably be expected in the industry;
  - b. Any precautions taken by the employer to limit the hazardous conditions;
  - c. The employer's awareness of the Act and of its responsibility to provide safe and healthful working conditions; and
  - d. Whether similar violations and/or hazardous conditions have been brought to the attention of the employer through prior citations, accidents, warnings from OSHA or officials from other government agencies or an employee safety committee regarding the requirements of a standard.

*NOTE: This includes prior citations or warnings from OSHA State Plan officials.*

4. Also, include facts showing that even if the employer was not consciously violating the Act, it was aware that the violative condition existed and made no reasonable effort to eliminate it.

## VI. Criminal/Willful Violations.

[Section 17\(e\)](#) of the Act, as amended, provides that: “Any employer who willfully violates any standard, rule or order promulgated pursuant to [Section 6](#) of this Act, or of any regulations prescribed pursuant to this Act, and that violation caused death to any employee, shall, upon conviction, be punished by a fine” of not more than \$250,000 for an individual and \$500,000 for an organization or by imprisonment for not more than six months nor less than 30 days, or by both. Note that this provision of the Act does not apply to [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) violations classified as willful. See [Chapter 6, Section XIII, Penalties and Debt Collection](#), regarding criminal penalties.

### A. Area Director Coordination.

The Area Director, in coordination with the RSOL, shall carefully evaluate all willful cases involving employee deaths to determine whether they may involve criminal violations of [Section 17\(e\)](#) of the Act. Because the quality of the evidence available is of paramount importance in these investigations, there shall be early and close discussions between the CSHO, the Area Director, the Regional Administrator, and the RSOL in developing all evidence when there is a potential Section 17(e) violation.

### B. Criteria for Investigating Possible Criminal/Willful Violations

The following criteria shall be considered in investigating possible criminal/willful violations:

1. In order to establish a criminal/willful violation OSHA must prove that:
  - a. The employer violated an OSHA standard. A criminal/willful violation cannot be based on violation of [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#).
  - b. The violation was willful in nature.
  - c. The violation of the standard caused the death of an employee. In order to prove that the violation caused the death of an employee, there must be evidence which clearly demonstrates that the violation of the standard was the direct cause of, or a contributing factor to, an employee's death.
2. If asked during an investigation, CSHOs should inform employers that any violation found to be willful that has caused or contributed to the death of an employee is evaluated for potential criminal referral to the U.S. Department of Justice.

3. Following the investigation, if the Area Director decides to recommend criminal prosecution, a memorandum shall be forwarded promptly to the Regional Administrator. It shall include an evaluation of the possible criminal charges, taking into consideration the burden of proof requiring that the Government's case be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition, if correction of the hazardous condition is at issue, this shall be noted in the transmittal memorandum, because in most cases prosecution of a criminal/willful case stays the resolution of the civil case and its abatement requirements.
4. The Area Director shall normally issue a civil citation in accordance with current procedures even if the citation involves charges under consideration for criminal prosecution. The Regional Administrator shall be notified of such cases. In addition, the case shall be promptly forwarded to the RSOL for possible referral to the U.S. Department of Justice.

C. **Willful Violations Related to a Fatality**

Where a willful violation is related to a fatality and a decision is made not to recommend a criminal referral, the Area Director shall ensure the case file contains documentation justifying that conclusion. The file documentation should indicate which elements of a potential criminal violation make the case unsuitable for referral.

**VII. Repeated Violations.**

A. **Federal and State Plan Violations.**

1. An employer may be cited for a repeated violation if that employer has been cited previously for the same or substantially similar condition or hazard **and the citation has become a final order of the Review Commission**. A citation may become a final order by operation of law when an employer does not contest the citation, or pursuant to court decision or settlement.
2. Prior citations by State Plan States cannot be used as a basis for Federal OSHA repeated violations. Only violations that have become final orders of the Review Commission may be considered.

**B. Identical Standards.**

Generally, similar workplace conditions or hazards can be demonstrated by showing that in both situations the identical standard was violated, but there are exceptions.

**EXAMPLE 4-28:** A citation was previously issued for a violation of [§1910.132\(a\)](#) for not requiring the use of safety-toe footwear for employees. A recent inspection of the same establishment revealed a violation of [§1910.132\(a\)](#) for not requiring the use of head protection (hardhats). Although the same standard was involved, the hazardous conditions in each case are not substantially similar and therefore a repeated violation would not be appropriate.

**C. Different Standards.**

In some circumstances, similar conditions or hazards can be demonstrated even when different standards are violated.

**EXAMPLE 4-29:** A citation was previously issued for a violation of [§1910.28\(d\)\(7\)](#) for not installing standard guardrails on a tubular welded frame scaffold platform. A recent inspection of the same employer reveals a violation of [§1910.28\(c\)\(14\)](#) for not installing guardrails on a tube and coupler scaffold platform. Although different standards are involved, the conditions and hazards (falls) present during both inspections were substantially similar, and therefore a repeated violation would be appropriate.

*NOTE: There is no requirement that the previous and current violations occur at the same workplace or under the same supervisor.*

**D. Obtaining Inspection History.**

For purposes of determining whether a violation is repeated, the following criteria shall apply:

1. **High Gravity Serious Violations.**
  - a. When high gravity serious violations are to be cited, the Area Director shall obtain a history of citations previously issued to this employer at all of its identified establishments nationwide, within the same two digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) or three digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. Note that for repeated violations at federal agencies, the history of citations is limited to region-wide.

- b. If these violations have been previously cited within the time limitations (described in [Paragraph VII.E.](#) of this chapter) and have become final orders of the Review Commission, a repeated citation may be issued.
- c. Under special circumstances, the Area Director, in consultation with the RSOL, may also issue citations for repeated violations without regard for the SIC code.

## 2. **Violations of Lesser Gravity.**

When violations are of lesser gravity than high gravity serious, Area Directors should obtain a national inspection history whenever the circumstances of the current inspection would result in multiple serious, repeat, or willful citations. This is particularly essential if the employer is known to have establishments nationwide and has been subject to a significant case in other areas or at other mobile worksites.

## **E. Time Limitations.**

1. Although there are no statutory limitations on the length of time that a prior citation was issued as a basis for a repeated violation, the following policy shall generally be followed.

A citation will be issued as a repeated violation if:

- a. The citation is issued within 3 years of the final order date of the previous citation or within 3 years of the final abatement date, whichever is later; and
  - b. If the previous citation was contested, within 3 years of the Review Commission's final order or the Court of Appeals final mandate.
2. When a violation is found during an inspection and a repeated citation has previously been issued for a substantially similar condition, the violation may be classified as a second instance repeated violation with a corresponding increase in penalty.

**EXAMPLE 4-30:** An inspection is conducted in an establishment and a violation of [§1910.217\(c\)\(1\)\(i\)](#) is found. That citation is not contested by the employer and becomes a final order of the Commission on October 17, 2006. On December 8, 2008, a citation for repeated violation of the same standard was issued. The violation found during the current inspection may be treated as a second instance repeated.

3. In cases of multiple prior repeated citations, the Regional Administrator or designee shall be consulted for guidance.

**F. Repeated v. Failure to Abate.**

A failure to abate exists when a previously cited hazardous condition, practice or non-complying equipment has not been brought into compliance since the prior inspection (i.e., the violation is continuously present) and is discovered at a later inspection. If, however, the violation was corrected, but later reoccurs, the subsequent occurrence is a repeated violation.

**G. Area Director Responsibilities.**

After the CSHO makes a recommendation that a violation should be cited as repeated, the Area Director shall:

1. Ensure that the violation meets the criteria outlined in the preceding subparagraphs of this section;
2. Ensure that the case file includes a copy of the citation for the prior violation, the OSHA-1Bs describing the prior violation that serves as the basis for the repeated citation, and any other supporting evidence that describes the violation. If the prior violation citation is not available, the basis for the repeated citation shall, nevertheless, be adequately documented in the case file. The file shall also include all documents showing that the citation is a final order and on what date it became final (i.e., if the case was not contested, the **certified mail card** (final 15 working days from employer's receipt of the citation), **signed Informal Settlement** (final 15 working days from when *both* parties signed) or **Formal Settlement Agreements and Notice of Docketing** (final 30 days after docketing date), or **Judge's Decision and Notice of Docketing** (final 30 days after docketing));
3. IMIS information shall not be used as the sole means to establish that a prior violation has been issued.
4. In circumstances when it is not clear that the violation meets the criteria outlined in this section, consult with the Regional Administrator or designee before issuing a repeated citation; and
5. If a repeated citation is issued, ensure that the cited employer is fully informed of the previous violations serving as a basis for the repeated citation by notation in the Alleged Violation Description (AVD) portion of the citation, using the following or similar language:

The (employer name) was previously cited for a violation of this occupational safety and health standard or its equivalent standard (name previously cited standard), which was contained in OSHA inspection number \_\_\_\_\_, citation number \_\_\_\_\_, item number \_\_\_\_\_ and was affirmed as a final order on (date), with respect to a workplace located at \_\_\_\_\_.

### VIII. De Minimis Conditions.

De minimis conditions are those where an employer has implemented a measure different than one specified in a standard, that has no direct or immediate relationship to safety or health. Whenever de minimis conditions are found during an inspection, they shall be documented in the same manner as violations.

#### A. Criteria.

The criteria for finding a de minimis condition are as follows:

1. An employer complies with the intent of the standard, yet deviates from its particular requirements in a manner that has no direct or immediate impact on employee safety or health. These deviations may involve, for example, distance specifications, construction material requirements, use of incorrect color, minor variations from recordkeeping, testing, or inspection regulations.

**EXAMPLE 4-31:** [§1910.27\(b\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) allows 12 inches as the maximum distance between ladder rungs. Where the rungs are 13 inches apart, the condition is de minimis.

**EXAMPLE 4-32:** [§1910.217\(e\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) requires that mechanical power presses be inspected and tested at least weekly. If the machinery is seldom used, inspection and testing prior to each use is adequate to meet the intent of the standard.

2. An employer complies with a proposed OSHA standard or amendment or a consensus standard rather than with the standard in effect at the time of the inspection and the employer's action clearly provides equal or greater employee protection.
3. An employer complies with a written interpretation issued by the OSHA National Office or an OSHA Regional Office.



4. An employer's workplace protections are “state of the art” and technically more enhanced than the requirements of the applicable standard and provides equivalent or more effective employee safety or health protection.

**B. Professional Judgment.**

Professional judgment should be exercised in determining whether noncompliance with a standard constitutes a de minimis condition.

**C. Area Director Responsibilities.**

Area Directors shall ensure that all proposed de minimis notices meet the criteria set out above.

**IX. Citing in the Alternative.**

In rare cases, the same factual situation may present a possible violation of more than one standard.

**EXAMPLE 4-33:** The facts which support a violation of [§1910.28\(a\)\(1\)](#) may also support a violation of [§1910.132\(a\)](#), if no scaffolding is provided and the use of safety belts is not required by the employer.

Where it appears that more than one standard is applicable to a given factual situation and that compliance with any of the applicable standards would effectively eliminate the hazard, it is permissible to cite alternative standards using the words “in the alternative.” A reference in the citation to each of the standards involved shall be accompanied by a separate AVD that clearly alleges all of the necessary elements of a violation of that standard. Only one penalty shall be proposed for the violative condition.

**X. Combining and Grouping Violations.**

**A. Combining.**

Separate violations of a single standard, for example [§1910.212\(a\)\(3\)\(ii\)](#), having the same classification found during the inspection of an establishment or worksite generally shall be combined into one alleged citation item. Different options presented in the SAVEs of the same standard shall normally also be combined. Each instance of the violation shall be separately set out within that item of the citation.

*NOTE: Except for standards which deal with multiple hazards (e.g., [Tables Z-1, Z-2 and Z-3](#) cited under [§1910.1000](#) (a), (b), or (c)), the same standard may not normally be cited more than once on a single citation.*

*However, the same standard may be cited on different citations based on separate classifications and facts on the same inspection.*

**B. Grouping.**

When a source of a hazard is identified which involves interrelated violations of different standards, the violations may be grouped into a single violation. The following situations normally call for grouping violations:

**1. Grouping Related Violations.**

If violations classified either as serious or other than serious are so closely related they may constitute as a single hazardous condition, such violations shall be grouped and the overall classification shall normally be based on the most serious item.

**2. Grouping Other-than-Serious Violation Where Grouping Results in a Serious Violation.**

When two or more violations are found which, if considered individually, represent other than serious violations, but together create a substantial probability of death or serious physical harm, the violations shall be grouped as a serious violation.

**3. Where Grouping Results in High Gravity Other-than-Serious Violation.**

Where the CSHO finds, during the course of the inspection, that a number of other-than-serious violations are present, the violations shall be considered in relation to each other to determine the overall gravity of possible injury resulting from an accident or incident involving the hazardous condition.

**4. Penalties for Grouped Violations.**

If penalties are to be proposed for grouped violations, the penalty shall be written across from the first violation item appearing on the OSHA-2.

**C. When Not to Group or Combine.**

**1. Multiple Inspections.**

Violations discovered during multiple inspections of a single establishment or worksite may not be grouped. Where only one OSHA-1 has been completed, an inspection at the same

establishment or worksite shall be considered a single inspection even if it continues for a period of more than one day, or is discontinued with the intention of later resuming it.

2. **Separate Establishments of the Same Employer.**

The employer shall be issued separate citations for each establishment or worksite where inspections are conducted, either simultaneously or at different times. If CSHOs conduct inspections at two establishments belonging to the same employer and instances of the same violation are discovered during each inspection, the violations shall not be grouped.

3. **General Duty Clause.**

Because a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation covers all aspects of a serious hazard where no standard exists, there shall be no grouping of separate Section 5(a)(1) violations. This policy, however, does not prohibit grouping a Section 5(a)(1) violation with a related violation of a specific standard.

4. **Egregious Violations.**

Violations, which are proposed as instance-by-instance citations, shall not normally be combined or grouped. See [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-by-Violation Penalties*, dated October 21, 1990.

**XI. Health Standard Violations.**

A. **Citation of Ventilation Standards.**

In cases where a citation of a ventilation standard is appropriate, consideration shall be given to standards intended to control exposure to hazardous levels of air contaminants, prevent fire or explosions, or regulate operations that may involve confined spaces or specific hazardous conditions. In such cases, the following guidelines shall be observed:

1. **Health-Related Ventilation Standards.**

- a. Where an over-exposure to an airborne contaminant is present, the appropriate air contaminant engineering control requirement shall be cited; e.g., [§1910.1000\(e\)](#). Citations of this standard shall not be issued to require specific volumes of air to reduce such exposures.

- b. Other requirements contained in health-related ventilation standards shall be evaluated without regard to the concentration of airborne contaminants. Where a specific standard has been violated and an actual or potential hazard has been documented, a citation shall be issued.

## 2. **Fire and Explosion-Related Ventilation Standards.**

Although not normally considered health violations, the following guidelines shall be observed when citing fire and explosion related ventilation standards:

### a. **Adequate Ventilation.**

An operation is considered to have **adequate** ventilation when **both** of the following criteria are present:

- The requirement(s) of the specific standard has been met.
- The concentration of flammable vapors is 25 percent or less of the lower explosive limit (LEL).

**EXCEPTION:** Some maritime standards require that levels be kept to 10 percent of the LEL (e.g. [§1915.36\(a\)](#)).

### b. **Citation Policy.**

If 25 percent (10 percent when specified for maritime operations) of the LEL has been exceeded and:

- The standard's requirements have not been met, violations of the applicable ventilation standard normally shall be cited as serious.
- If there is no applicable ventilation standard, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) of the Act shall be cited in accordance with the guidelines in Section III of this chapter, General Duty Requirement.

## B. **Violations of the Noise Standard.**

Current enforcement policy regarding [§1910.95\(b\)\(1\)](#) allows employers to rely on personal protective equipment and a hearing conservation program, rather than engineering and/or administrative controls, when

hearing protectors will effectively attenuate the noise to which employees are exposed to acceptable levels. (See Tables G-16 or G-16a of the standard).

1. Citations for violations of [§1910.95\(b\)\(1\)](#) shall be issued when technologically and economically feasible engineering and/or administrative controls have not been implemented; and
  - a. Employee exposure levels are so elevated that hearing protectors alone may not reliably reduce noise levels received to levels specified in Tables G-16 or G-16a of the standard. (e.g., Hearing protectors which offer the greatest attenuation may reliably be used to protect employees when their exposure levels border on 100 dba). See [CPL 02-02-035](#), *29 CFR 1910.95(b)(1), Guidelines for Noise Enforcement; Appendix A*, dated December 19, 1983; or
  - b. The costs of engineering and/or administrative controls are less than the cost of an effective hearing conservation program.
2. When an employer has an ongoing hearing conservation program and the results of audiometric testing indicate that existing controls and hearing protectors are adequately protecting employees, no additional controls may be necessary. In making this assessment, factors such as exposure levels present, number of employees tested, and duration of the testing program shall be considered.
3. When employee noise exposures are less than 100 dBA but the employer does not have an ongoing hearing conservation program, or results of audiometric testing indicate that the employer's existing program is inadequate, the CSHO shall consider whether:
  - a. Reliance on an effective hearing conservation program would be less costly than engineering and/or administrative controls.
  - b. An effective hearing conservation program can be established or improvements made in an existing program which could bring the employer into compliance with Tables G-16 or G-16a.
  - c. Engineering and/or administrative controls are both technically and economically feasible.
4. If noise workplace levels can be reduced to the levels specified in Tables G-16 or 16a by means of hearing protectors along with an effective hearing conservation program, a citation for any missing

program elements shall be issued rather than for lack of engineering controls. If improvements in the hearing conservation program cannot be made or, if made, cannot reasonably be expected to reduce exposures, but feasible controls exist to address the hazard, then [§1910.95\(b\)\(1\)](#) shall be cited.

5. When hearing protection is required but not used and employee exposures exceed the limits of Table G-16, [§1910.95\(i\)\(2\)\(i\)](#) shall be cited and classified as serious (see (8), below) whether or not the employer has instituted a hearing conservation program. [§1910.95\(a\)](#) shall no longer be cited except in the case of the oil and gas drilling industry.

*NOTE: Citations of [§1910.95\(i\)\(2\)\(ii\)\(b\)](#) shall also be classified as serious.*

6. Where an employer has instituted a hearing conservation program and a violation of one or more elements (other than [§1910.95\(i\)\(2\)\(ii\)\(b\)](#) or [\(i\)\(2\)\(ii\)\(b\)](#)) is found, citations for the deficient elements of the noise standard shall be issued if exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dB.
7. If an employer has not instituted a hearing conservation program and employee exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dB, a citation for [§1910.95\(c\)](#) only shall be issued.
8. Violations of [§1910.95\(i\)\(2\)\(i\)](#) may be grouped with violations of [§1910.95\(b\)\(1\)](#) and classified as serious when employees are exposed to noise levels above the limits of Table G-16 and:
  - a. Hearing protection is not utilized or is not adequate to prevent overexposures; or
  - b. There is evidence of hearing loss that could reasonably be considered:
    - To be work-related, and
    - To have been preventable, if the employer had been in compliance with the cited provisions.
9. No citation shall be issued where, in the absence of feasible engineering or administrative controls, employees are exposed to elevated noise levels, but effective hearing protection is being

provided and used, and the employer has implemented a hearing conservation program.

## **XII. Violations of the Respiratory Protection Standard (§1910.134).**

If an inspection reveals the presence of potential respirator violations, [CPL 02-00-120](#), *Inspection Procedures for the Respiratory Protection Standard*, dated September 25, 1998, shall be followed.

## **XIII. Violations of Air Contaminant Standards (§1910.1000).**

### **A. Requirements under the standard:**

1. [Section 1910.1000\(a\)](#) through (d) provide ceiling values and 8-hour time – weighted averages applicable to employee exposure to air contaminants.
2. [Section 1910.1000\(e\)](#) provides that to achieve compliance with those exposure limits, administrative or engineering controls shall first be identified and implemented to the extent feasible. When such controls do not achieve full compliance, personal protective equipment shall be used. Whenever respirators are used, their use shall comply with [§1910.134](#).
3. Section [§1910.134\(a\)](#) provides that when effective engineering controls are not feasible, or while they are being instituted, appropriate respirators shall be used.
4. There may be cases where workplace conditions require that employers provide engineering controls as well as administrative controls (including work practice controls) **and** personal protective equipment. [Section 1910.1000\(e\)](#) allows employers to implement feasible engineering controls and/or administrative and work practice controls in any combination, provided the selected abatement means eliminates the overexposure.
5. Where engineering and/or administrative controls are feasible but do not, or would not, reduce air contaminant levels below applicable ceiling values or threshold limit values, an employer must nevertheless institute such controls to reduce the exposure levels. In cases where the implementation of all feasible engineering and administrative controls fails to reduce the level of air contaminants below applicable levels, employers must additionally provide personal protective equipment to reduce exposures.

**B. Classification of Violations of Air Contaminant Standards.**

Where employees are exposed to a toxic substance in excess of the PEL established by OSHA standards (without regard to the use of respirator protection), a citation for exceeding the air contaminant standard shall be issued. The violation shall be classified as serious or other-than-serious on the criteria set forth in the Chemical Sampling Information web page and based on whether respirators are being used. Classification of these violations is dependent upon the determination that an illness is reasonably predictable at the measured exposure level.

**1. Classification Considerations.**

Exposure to regulated substances shall be characterized as serious if exposures could cause impairment to the body as described in [Paragraph II.C.3.](#) of this chapter.

- a. In general, substances having a single health code of 13 or less shall be considered as posing a serious health hazard at any level above the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL). Substances in categories 6, 8 and 12, however, are not considered serious at levels where only mild, temporary effects would be expected to occur.
- b. Substances causing irritation (i.e., categories 14 and 15) shall be considered other-than-serious up to levels at which "moderate" irritation could be expected.
- c. For a substance having multiple health codes covering both serious and other-than-serious effects (e.g., cyclohexanol), a classification of other-than-serious is appropriate up to levels where serious a health effect(s) could be expected to occur.
- d. For a substance having an ACGIH Threshold Limit Value (TLV) or a NIOSH recommended value, but no OSHA PEL, a citation for exposure in excess of the recommended value may be considered under [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) of the Act. Prior to citing a Section 5(a)(1) violation under these circumstances, it is essential that CSHOs document that a *hazardous exposure* is occurring or has occurred at the workplace, not just that a recognized occupational exposure recommendation has been exceeded. See instructions in [Section III](#) of this chapter, *General Duty Requirements*.
- e. If an employee is exposed to concentrations of a substance below the PEL, but in excess of a recommended value (e.g.,



ACGIH TLV or NIOSH recommended value), citations will not normally be issued. CSHOs shall advise employers that a reduction of the PEL has been recommended.

*NOTE: An exception to this may apply if it can be documented that an employer knows that a particular safety or health standard fails to protect his workers against the specific hazard it is intended to address.*

- f. For a substance having an 8-hour PEL with no ceiling PEL but ACGIH or NIOSH has recommended a ceiling value, the case shall be referred to the Regional Administrator in accordance with [Paragraph III.D.2.](#) of this chapter. If no citation is issued, CSHO shall advise employers that a ceiling value is recommended.

## 2. **Additive and Synergistic Effects.**

- a. Substances which have a known additive effect and, therefore, result in a greater probability/severity of risk when found in combination with each other shall be evaluated using the formula found in [§1910.1000\(d\)\(2\)](#). Use of this formula requires that exposures have an additive effect on the **same** body organ or system.
- b. If CSHOs suspect that synergistic effects are possible they shall consult with their supervisor, who shall then refer the question to the Regional Administrator. If a synergistic effect of the cited substances is determined to be present, violations shall be grouped to accurately reflect severity and/or penalty.

## **XIV. Citing Improper Personal Hygiene Practices.**

The following guidelines apply when citing personal hygiene violations:

### **A. Ingestion Hazards.**

A citation under [§1910.141\(g\)\(2\)](#) and (4) shall be issued where there is reasonable probability that, in areas where employees consume food or beverages (including drinking fountains), a significant quantity of a toxic material may be ingested and subsequently absorbed.

1. For citations under [§1910.141\(g\)\(2\)](#) and (4), wipe sampling results shall be taken to establish the potential for a serious hazard.

2. Where, for any substance, a serious hazard is determined to exist due to potential for ingestion or absorption for reasons other than the consumption of contaminated food or drink (e.g., smoking materials contaminated with the toxic substance), a serious citation shall be considered under [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) of the Act.

**B. Absorption Hazards.**

A citation for exposure to materials that may be absorbed through the skin or can cause a skin effect (e.g., dermatitis) shall be issued where appropriate personal protective clothing is necessary, but is not provided or worn. If a serious skin absorption or dermatitis hazard exists that cannot be eliminated with protective clothing, a [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) citation may be considered. Engineering or administrative (including work practice) controls may be required in these cases to prevent the hazard. See [§1910.132\(a\)](#).

**C. Wipe Sampling.**

In general, wipe samples, not measurements for air concentrations, will be necessary to establish the presence of a toxic substance posing a potential absorption or ingestion hazard. (See [TED 01-00-015](#), *OSHA Technical Manual*, dated January 20, 1999, for sampling procedures.)

**D. Citation Policy.**

The following criteria should be considered prior to issuing a citation for ingestion or absorption hazards:

1. A health risk exist as demonstrated by one of the following:
  - a. A potential for an illness, such as dermatitis, and/or
  - b. The presence of a toxic substance that may be potentially ingested or absorbed through the skin. (See the [Chemical Sampling Information](#) web page.)
2. The potential for employee exposure by ingestion or absorption may be established by taking both qualitative and quantitative wipe samples. The substance must be present on surfaces that employees contact (such as lunch tables, water fountains, work areas etc.) or on other surfaces, which, if contaminated, present the potential for ingestion or absorption.
3. The sampling results must reveal that the substance has properties and exists in quantities that pose a serious hazard.

**XV. Biological Monitoring.**

If an employer has been conducting biological monitoring, CSHOs shall evaluate the results of such testing. These results may assist in determining whether a significant quantity of the toxic substance is being ingested or absorbed through the skin

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\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

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## Chapter 5

### CASE FILE PREPARATION AND DOCUMENTATION

#### I. Introduction.

These instructions are provided to assist CSHOs in determining the minimum level of written documentation necessary in preparation of an inspection case file. All necessary information relative to documentation of violations shall be obtained during the inspection, (including but not limited to notes, audio/videotapes, photographs, employer and employee interviews and employer maintained records). CSHOs shall develop detailed information for the case file to establish the specific elements of each violation.

CSHOs and Area Directors shall follow all Regional consultation procedures, including those established by the RSOL's Office, when an inspection involves important or novel facts or presents potentially complex litigation issues. If consultation is necessary, it shall be conducted at the earliest possible stage of the inspection.

#### II. Inspection Conducted, Citations Being Issued.

All case files must include the following forms and documents.

##### A. OSHA-1.

The CSHO shall obtain available information to complete the OSHA-1 and other appropriate forms.

##### B. OSHA-1A.

The OSHA-1A shall list the following:

1. Establishment Name;
2. Inspection Number;
3. Additional Citation Mailing Addresses;
4. Names and Addresses of all Organized Employee Groups;
5. Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers of Authorized Representatives of Employees;
6. Employer Representatives contacted and the extent of their participation in the inspection;

7. CSHO's evaluation of the Employer's Safety and Health System, and if applicable, a discussion of any penalty reduction for good faith;
8. A written narrative containing accurate and concise information about the employer and the worksite;
9. Date the closing conference(s) was held and description of any unusual circumstances encountered;
10. Any other relevant comments/information CSHOs believe may be helpful, based on his/her professional judgment;
11. Names, Addresses and Phone Numbers of other persons contacted during the inspection, such as the police, coroner, attorney, etc.;
12. Names and Job Titles of any individuals who accompanied the CSHO on the inspection;
13. Calculation of the DART rate (at least three full calendar years and the current year);
14. Discussion clearly addressing all items on the Complaint or Referral;
15. Type of Legal Entity [Indicate whether the employer is a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, etc. (Do not use the word "owner.") If the employer named is a subsidiary of another firm, indicate that.]; and
16. Coverage Information.

**C. OSHA-1B.**

1. A separate OSHA-1B should normally be completed for each alleged violation. Describe the observed hazardous conditions or practices, including all relevant facts, and all information pertaining to how and/or why a standard is violated. Specifically identify the hazard to which employees have been or could be exposed. Describe the type of injury or illness which the violated standard was designed to prevent in this situation, or note the name and exposure level of any contaminant or harmful physical agent to which employees are, have been, or could be potentially exposed. If employee exposure was not actually observed during the inspection, state the facts on which the determination was made

(i.e., tools left inside an unprotected trench) that an employee has been or could have been exposed to a safety or health hazard.

2. The following information shall be documented:
  - a. Explanation of the hazard(s) or hazardous condition(s);
  - b. Identification of the machinery or equipment (such as equipment type, manufacturer, model number, serial number);
  - c. Specific location of the hazard and employee exposure to the hazard;
  - d. Injury or illness likely to result from exposure to the hazard;
  - e. Employee proximity to the hazard and specific measurements taken, (describe how measurements were taken, identify the measuring techniques and equipment used, identify those who were present and observed the measurements being made, include calibration dates of equipment used);
  - f. For contaminants and physical agents, any additional facts that clarify the nature of employee exposure. A representative number of Material Safety Data Sheets should be collected for hazardous chemicals that employees may potentially be exposed to;
  - g. Names, addresses, phone numbers, and job titles for exposed employees;
  - h. Approximate duration of time the hazard has existed and frequency of exposure to the hazard;
  - i. Employer knowledge;
  - j. Any and all facts which establish that the employer actually knew of the hazardous condition, or what reasonable steps the employer failed to take (including regular inspections of the worksite) that could have revealed the presence of the hazardous condition. The mere presence of the employer in the workplace is not sufficient evidence of knowledge. There must be evidence that demonstrates why the employer reasonably could have recognized the presence of the hazardous condition. Avoid relying on conclusory statements such as “reasonable diligence” to establish employer knowledge. See [Chapter 4](#),

Paragraph II.C.4., *Knowledge of the Hazardous Condition*, for additional information.

- In order to establish that a violation may be potentially classified as willful, facts shall be documented to show either that the employer knew of the applicable legal requirements and intentionally violated them or that the employer showed plain indifference to employee safety or health (See Section V of Chapter 4, *Willful Violations*). For example, document facts that the employer knew that the condition existed and that the employer was required to take additional steps to abate the hazard. Such evidence could include prior OSHA citations, previous warnings by a CSHO, insurance company or city/state inspector regarding the requirements of the standard(s), the employer's familiarity with the standard(s), contract specifications requiring compliance with applicable standards, or warnings by employees or employee safety representatives of the presence of a hazardous condition and what protections are required by OSHA standards.
  - Also include facts showing that even if the employer was not consciously or intentionally violating the Act, the employer acted with such plain indifference for employee safety that had the employer known of the standard, it probably would not have complied anyway. This type of evidence would include instances where an employer was aware of an employee exposure to an obviously hazardous condition(s) and made no reasonable effort to eliminate it.
  - Any relevant comments made by the employer or employee during the walkaround or closing conference, including any employer comments regarding why it violated the standard, which may be characterized as admissions of the specific violations described; and
- k. Include any other facts, which may assist in evaluating the situation or in reconstructing the total inspection picture in preparation for testimony in possible legal actions.
- l. Appropriate and consistent abatement dates should be assigned and documented for abatement periods longer than 30 days. The abatement period shall be the shortest interval within which the employer can reasonably be expected to correct the



violation. An abatement period should be indicated in the citation as a specific date, not a number of days. When abatement is witnessed by the CSHO during an inspection, the abatement period shall be listed on the citation as “Corrected During Inspection.”

- m. The establishment of the shortest practicable abatement date requires the exercise of professional judgment on the part of the CSHO. Abatement periods exceeding 30 days shall not normally be offered, particularly for simple safety violations. Situations may arise, however, especially for complex health or program violations, where abatement cannot be completed within 30 days (e.g., ventilation equipment needs to be installed, new parts or equipment need to be ordered, delivered and installed or a process hazard analysis needs to be performed as part of a PSM program). When an initial abatement date is granted that is in excess of 30 calendar days, the reason should be documented in the case file.
3. Records obtained during the course of the inspection which the CSHO determines are necessary to support the violations.
4. For violations classified as repeated, the file shall include a copy of the previous citation(s) on which the repeat classification is based and documentation of the final order date of the original citation.

### **III. Inspection Conducted But No Citations Issued.**

For inspections that do not result in citations being issued, a lesser amount of documentation may be included in the case file. At a minimum, the case file shall include the OSHA-1, the OSHA-1A, and a general narrative/statement that at the time of the inspection no conditions were observed in violation of any standard, and a complaint/referral response letter, if appropriate shall clearly address all of the item(s).

### **IV. No Inspection.**

For “No Inspections,” the CSHO shall include in the case file an OSHA-1, which indicates the reason why no inspection was conducted. If there was a denial of entry, the information necessary to obtain a warrant or an explanation of why a warrant is not being sought shall be included. The case file shall also include a complaint/referral response letter, if appropriate, which explains why an inspection was not conducted.

**V. Health Inspections.**

**A. Document Potential Exposure.**

In addition to the documentation indicated above, CSHOs shall document all relevant information concerning potential exposure(s) to chemical substances or physical agents (including, as appropriate, collection and evaluation of applicable Material Safety Data Sheets), such as symptoms experienced by employees, duration and frequency of exposures to the hazard, employee interviews, sources of potential health hazards, types of engineering or administrative controls implemented by the employer, and personal protective equipment being provided by the employer and used by employees.

**B. Employer's Occupational Safety and Health System.**

CSHOs shall request and evaluate information on the following aspects of the employer's occupational safety and health system as it relates to the scope of the inspection:

**1. Monitoring.**

The employer's system for monitoring safety and health hazards in the establishment should include a program for self-inspection. CSHOs shall discuss the employer's maintenance schedules and inspection records. Additional information shall be obtained concerning activities such as sampling and calibration procedures, ventilation measurements, preventive maintenance procedures for engineering controls, and laboratory services. Compliance with the monitoring requirements of any applicable substance-specific health standards shall be determined.

**2. Medical.**

CSHOs shall determine whether the employer provides the employees with pre-placement and periodic medical examinations. The medical examination protocol shall be requested to determine the extent of the medical examinations and, if applicable, compliance with the medical surveillance requirements of any applicable substance-specific health standards.

**3. Records Program.**

CSHOs shall determine the extent of the employer's records program, such as whether records pertaining to employee exposure and medical records are being maintained in accordance with [§1910.1020](#).

4. **Engineering Controls.**

CSHOs shall identify any engineering controls present, including substitution, isolation, general dilution and local exhaust ventilation, and equipment modification.

5. **Work Practice and Administrative Controls.**

CSHOs shall identify any control techniques, including personal hygiene, housekeeping practices, employee job rotation, employee training and education. Rotation of employees as an administrative control requires employer knowledge of the extent and duration of exposure.

*NOTE: Employee rotation is not permitted as a control under some standards.*

6. **Personal Protective Equipment.**

An effective personal protective equipment program should exist in the plant. A detailed evaluation of the program shall be documented to determine compliance with specific standards, such as, §§[1910.95](#), [1910.134](#), and [1910.132](#).

7. **Regulated Areas.**

CSHOs shall investigate compliance with the requirements for regulated areas as specified by certain standards. Regulated areas must be clearly identified and known to all appropriate employees. The regulated area designation must be maintained according to the prescribed criteria of the applicable standard.

8. **Emergency Action Plan.**

CSHOs shall evaluate the employer's emergency action plan when such a plan is required by a specific standard. When standards provide that specific emergency procedures be developed where certain hazardous substances are handled, CSHO's evaluation shall determine if: potential emergency conditions are included in the written plan, emergency conditions are explained to employees and there is a training program for the protection of affected employees, including use and maintenance of personal protective equipment.

## VI. Affirmative Defenses.

An affirmative defense is a claim which, if established by the employer and found to exist by the CSHO, will excuse the employer from a citation that has otherwise been documented.

### A. Burden of Proof.

Although employers have the burden of proving any affirmative defenses at the time of a hearing, CSHOs must anticipate when an employer is likely to raise an argument supporting such a defense. CSHOs shall keep in mind all potential affirmative defenses and attempt to gather contrary evidence, particularly when an employer makes an assertion that would indicate raising a defense/excuse against the violation(s). CSHOs shall bring all documentation of hazards and facts related to possible affirmative defenses to the attention of the Area Director or designee.

### B. Explanations.

The following are explanations of common affirmative defenses.

#### 1. Unpreventable Employee or Supervisory Misconduct or “Isolated Event.”

- a. To establish this defense in most jurisdictions, employers must show all the following elements:
  - A work rule adequate to prevent the violation;
  - Effective communication of the rule to employees;
  - Methods for discovering violations of work rules; and
  - Effective enforcement of rules when violations are discovered.
- b. CSHOs shall document whether these elements are present, including if the work rule at issue tracks the requirements of the standard addressing the hazardous condition.

**EXAMPLE 5-1:** An unguarded table saw is observed. The saw, however, has a guard which is reattached while the CSHO watches. Facts to be documented include:

- Who removed the guard and why?

- Did the employer know that the guard had been removed?
- How long or how often had the saw been used without the guard?
- Were there any supervisors in the area while the saw was operated without a guard?
- Did the employer have a work rule that the saw only be operated with the guard on?
- How was the work rule communicated to employees?
- Did the employer monitor compliance with the rule?
- How was the work rule enforced by the employer when it found noncompliance?

## 2. **Impossibility/Infeasibility of Compliance.**

Compliance with the requirements of a standard is impossible or would prevent performance of required work **and the employer took reasonable alternative steps to protect employees or there are no alternative means of employee protection available.**

**EXAMPLE 5-2:** An unguarded table saw is observed. The employer states that a guard would interfere with the nature of the work. Facts to be documented include:

- Would a guard make performance of the work impossible or merely more difficult?
- Could a guard be used some of the time or for some of the operations?
- Has the employer attempted to use a guard?
- Has the employer considered any alternative means of avoiding or reducing the hazard?

## 3. **Greater Hazard.**

Compliance with a standard would result in a greater hazard(s) to employees than would noncompliance **and** the employer took reasonable alternative protective measures, or there are no

alternative means of employee protection. Additionally, an application for a variance would be inappropriate.

**EXAMPLE 5-3:** The employer indicates that a saw guard had been removed because it caused the operator to be struck in the face by particles thrown from the saw. Facts to be documented include:

- Was the guard initially properly installed and used?
- Would a different type of guard eliminate the problem?
- How often was the operator struck by particles and what kind of injuries resulted?
- Would personal protective equipment such as safety glasses or a face shield worn by the employee solve the problem?
- Was the operator's work practice causing the problem and did the employer attempt to correct the problem?
- Was a variance requested?

## **VII. Interview Statements.**

### **A. Generally.**

Interview statements of employees or other individuals shall be obtained to adequately document a potential violation. Statements shall normally be in writing and the individual shall be encouraged to sign and date the statement. During management interviews, CSHOs are encouraged to take verbatim, contemporaneous notes whenever possible as these tend to be more credible than later general recollections.

### **B. CSHOs shall obtain written statements when:**

1. There is an actual or potential controversy as to any material facts concerning a violation;
2. A conflict or difference among employee statements as to the facts arises;
3. There is a potential willful or repeated violation; and
4. In accident investigations, when attempting to determine if potential violations existed at the time of the accident.

**C. Language and Wording of Statement.**

Interview statements shall normally be written in the first person and in the language of the individual when feasible. (Statements taken in a language other than English shall be subsequently translated.) The wording of the statement shall be understandable to the individual and reflect only the information that has been brought out in the interview. The individual shall initial any changes or corrections to the statement; otherwise, the statement shall not be modified, added to or altered in any way. The statement shall end with the wording: "I have read the above, or the statement has been read to me, and it is true to the best of my knowledge." Where appropriate, the statement shall also include the following: "I request that my statement be held confidential to the extent allowed by law." Only the individual interviewed may later waive the confidentiality of the statement. The individual shall sign and date the interview statement and the CSHO shall sign it as a witness.

**D. Refusal to Sign Statement.**

If the individual refuses to sign the statement, the CSHO shall note such refusal on the statement. Statements shall be read to the individual and an attempt made to obtain an agreement. A note to this effect shall be documented in the case file. Recorded statements shall be transcribed whenever possible.

**E. Video and Audiotaped Statements.**

Interview statements may be videotaped or audiotaped, with the consent of the person being interviewed. The statement shall be reduced to writing in egregious, fatality/catastrophe, willful, repeated, failure to abate, and other significant cases so that it may be signed. CSHOs are encouraged to produce the written statement for correction and signature as soon as possible, and identify the transcriber.

**F. Administrative Depositions.**

When necessary to document or develop investigative facts, a management official or other individual may be administratively deposed.

*NOTE: See [Chapter 3, Paragraph VII.I.4.](#), Interviews of Non-Managerial Employees, for additional guidance regarding interviews of non-managerial employees.*

## **VIII. Paperwork and Written Program Requirements.**

In certain cases, violations of standards requiring employers to have a written program to address a hazard or make a written certification (e. g., hazard communication, personal protective equipment, permit required confined spaces and others) are considered paperwork deficiencies. However, in some circumstances, violations of such standards may have an adverse impact on employee safety and health. See [CPL 02-00-111](#), *Citation Policy for Paperwork and Written Program Requirement Violations*.

## **IX. Guidelines for Case File Documentation for Use with Videotapes and Audiotapes.**

The use of videotaping as a method of documenting violations and of gathering evidence for inspection case files is encouraged. Certain types of inspections, such as fatalities, imminent danger and ergonomics shall include videotaping. Other methods of documentation, such as handwritten notes, audiotaping, and photographs, continue to be acceptable and are encouraged to be used whenever they add to the quality of the evidence and whenever videotaping equipment is not available. See [CPL 02-00-098](#), *Guidelines for Case File Documentation for use with Videotapes and Audiotapes*, dated October 12, 1993.

## **X. Case File Activity Diary Sheet.**

All case files shall contain an activity diary sheet, which is designed to provide a ready record and summary of all actions relating to a case. It will be used to document important events or actions related to the case, especially those not noted elsewhere in the case file. Diary entries should be clear, concise and legible and should be dated in chronological order to reflect a timeline of the case development. Information provided should include, at a minimum, the date of the action or event, a brief description of the action or event and the initials of the person making the entry. When a case file is completed, the CSHO must ensure that it is properly organized. See [ADM 03-01-005](#), *OSHA Compliance Records*, dated August 3, 1998.

## **XI. Citations.**

[Section 9](#) of the OSH Act addresses the form and issuance of citations.

Section 9(a) provides: "... Each citation shall be in writing and shall describe with particularity the nature of the violation including a reference to the provision of the Act, standard, rule, regulation, or order alleged to have been violated. In addition, the citation shall fix a reasonable time for the abatement of the violation...."



A. **Statute of Limitations.**

[Section 9\(c\)](#) provides. "...No citation may be issued under this Section after the expiration of six months following the occurrence of any violation." Accordingly, a citation shall not be issued where any alleged violation last occurred six months or more prior to the date on which the citation is actually signed, dated and served by certified mail as provided by [Section 10\(a\)](#) of the Act. Where the actions or omissions of the employer concealed the existence of the violation, the six-month issuance limitation is tolled until such time that OSHA learns or could have learned of the violation. The RSOL shall be consulted in such cases. In some cases, particularly those involving fatalities or accidents, the six-month period begins to run from the date of the incident, not from the opening conference date.

B. **Issuing Citations.**

1. Citations shall be sent by certified mail. Hand delivery of citations to the employer or an appropriate agent of the employer, or use of a mail delivery service other than the United States Postal Service, may be used **in addition** to certified mail if it is believed that these methods would effectively give the employer notice of the citation. A signed receipt shall be obtained whenever possible. The circumstances of delivery shall be documented in the diary sheet.
2. Citations shall be mailed to employee representatives after the Certified Mail Receipt card is received by the Area Office. Citations shall also be mailed to any employee upon request and without the need to make a written request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In the case of a fatality, the family of the victim shall be provided with a copy of the citations without charge or the need to make a written request.

C. **Amending/Withdrawing Citations and Notification of Penalties.**

1. **Amendment Justification.**

Amendments to, or withdrawal of, a citation shall be made when information is presented to the Area Director or designee, which indicates a need for such action and may include administrative or technical errors such as:

- a. Citation of an incorrect standard;
- b. Incorrect or incomplete description of the alleged violation;

- c. Additional facts not available to the CSHO at the time of the inspection establish a valid affirmative defense;
- d. Additional facts not available to the CSHO at the time of the inspection establish that there was no employee exposure to the hazard; or
- e. Additional facts establish a need for modification of the abatement date or the penalty, or reclassification of citation items.

2. **When Amendment is not Appropriate.**

Amendments to, or withdrawal of, a citation shall not be made by the Area Director or designee for any of the following:

- a. Timely Notice of Contest received;
- b. The 15 working days for filing a Notice of Contest has expired and the citation has become a Final Order; or
- c. Employee representatives were not given the opportunity to present their views (unless the revision involves only an administrative or technical error).

D. **Procedures for Amending or Withdrawing Citations.**

The following procedures apply whenever amending or withdrawing citations.

*NOTE: The instructions contained in this section, with appropriate modifications, are also applicable to the amendment of the OSHA-2B, Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation.*

- 1. Withdrawal of, or modifications to, the citation and notification of penalty, shall normally be accomplished by means of Informal or Formal Settlement Agreements.
- 2. In exceptional circumstances, the Area Director or designee may initiate a change to a citation and notification of penalty without an informal conference. If proposed amendments to citation items (individual violations) change the original classification of the items, such as willful to repeated, the original items shall be withdrawn and the new, appropriate items will be issued. The amended Citation and Notification of Penalty Form (OSHA-2) shall clearly indicate that the employer is obligated under the Act to post the amendment to the citation along with the original

citation, until the amended violation has been corrected, or for three working days, whichever is longer.

3. The 15 working day contest period for the amended portions of the citation will begin on the day following the day of receipt of the amended Citation and Notification of Penalty.
4. The contest period is not extended for the unamended portions of the original citation. A copy of the original citation shall be attached to the amended Citation and Notification of Penalty Form when the amended form is forwarded to the employer.
5. When circumstances warrant, the Area Director or designee may withdraw a citation and notification of penalty in its entirety. Justification for the withdrawal must be noted in the case file. A letter withdrawing the Citation and Notification of Penalty shall be sent to the employer. The letter, signed by the Area Director or designee, shall refer to the original citation and notification of penalty, state that they are withdrawn and direct that the employer post the letter for three working days in the same location(s) where the original citation was posted. When applicable, a copy of the letter shall also be sent to the employee representative(s) and/or complainant.

## **XII. Inspection Records.**

### **A. Generally.**

1. Inspection records are any record made by a CSHO that concern, relate to, or are part of, any inspection, or are a part of the performance of any official duty.
2. All official forms and notes constituting the basic documentation of a case must be part of the case file. All original field notes are part of the inspection record and shall be maintained in the file. Inspection records also include photographs (including digital photographs), negatives of photographs, videotapes, DVDs and audiotapes. Inspection records are the property of the United States Government and not the property of the CSHO and are not to be retained or used for any private purpose.

### **B. Release of Inspection Information.**

The information obtained during inspections is confidential, but may be disclosable or non-disclosable based on criteria established in the Freedom

of Information Act. Requests for release of inspection information shall be directed to the Area director or designee.

**C. Classified and Trade Secret Information.**

1. Any classified or trade secret information and/or personal knowledge of such information by agency personnel shall be handled in accordance with OSHA regulations. Trade Secrets are matters that are not of public or general knowledge. A trade secret, as referenced in [Section 15](#) of the Act, includes information concerning or related to processes, operations, style of work, or apparatus, or to the identity, confidential statistical data, amount or source of any income, profits, losses, or expenditures of any person, firm, partnership, corporation, or association. See [18 USC 1905](#). The collection of such information and the number of personnel with access to it shall be limited to the minimum necessary for the conduct of investigative activities. CSHOs shall specifically identify any classified and trade secret information in the case file. Title 18 USC 1905, as referenced by [Section 15](#) of the OSH Act, provides for criminal penalties in the event of improper disclosure.
2. It is essential to the effective enforcement of the Act that CSHOs and all OSHA personnel preserve the confidentiality of all information and investigations which might reveal a trade secret. When the employer identifies an operation or condition as a trade secret, it shall be treated as such (unless, after following proper procedures, including consulting with the Solicitor's Office, the agency determines that the matter is not a trade secret). Information obtained in such areas, including all negatives, photographs, videotapes and documentation forms shall be labeled:  
  
"ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTROLLED INFORMATION"  
"RESTRICTED TRADE INFORMATION"
3. Under [Section 15](#) of the Act, all information reported to or obtained by CSHOs in connection with any inspection or other activity which contains or may reveal a trade secret shall be kept confidential. Such information shall not be disclosed except to other OSHA officials concerned with the enforcement of the Act or, when relevant, in any proceeding under the Act.
4. [Title 18 USC 1905](#), provides criminal penalties for Federal employees who disclose such information. These penalties include fines up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, and removal from office or employment.

5. Trade secret materials shall not be labeled as “Top Secret,” “Secret,” or “Confidential,” nor shall these security classification designations be used in conjunction with other words, unless the trade secrets are also classified by an agency of the U. S. Government in the interest of national security.
  
6. If the employer objects to the taking of photographs and/or videotapes because trade secrets would or may be disclosed, CSHOs should advise employers of the protection against such disclosure afforded by [Section 15](#) of the Act and [§1903.9](#). If the employer still objects, CSHOs shall contact the RSOLs office, Area Director or designee for guidance.

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\* OSHA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT \*

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## Chapter 6

### PENALTIES AND DEBT COLLECTION

#### I. General Penalty Policy.

The penalty structure in [Section 17](#) of the OSH Act is designed primarily to provide an incentive for preventing or correcting violations voluntarily, not only to the cited employer, but to other employers. While penalties are not designed as punishment for violations, Congress has made clear its intent that penalty amounts should be sufficient to serve as an effective deterrent to violations.

Proposed penalties, therefore, serve the public policy purpose intended under the Act; and criteria approved for such penalties by the Assistant Secretary are based on effectuating this purpose.

The penalty structure described in this chapter is part of OSHA's general enforcement policy and shall normally be applied as set forth below. If, in a specific case, the Area Director determines that it is warranted to depart from the general policy in order to achieve the appropriate deterrent effect, the extent of the departure and the reasons for doing so should be fully explained in the case file.

#### II. Civil Penalties.

##### A. Statutory Authority for Civil Penalties.

[Section 17](#) provides the Secretary with the statutory authority to propose civil penalties for violations of the Act. Civil penalties advance the purposes of the Act by encouraging compliance and deterring violations. **Proposed penalties** are the penalty amounts OSHA issues with citation(s).

1. [Section 17\(a\)](#) of the Act provides that any employer who willfully or repeatedly violates the Act may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$70,000 for each violation, but not less than \$5,000 for each willful violation.
2. [Section 17\(b\)](#) provides that any employer who has received a citation for an alleged violation of the Act which is determined to be of a serious nature shall be assessed a civil penalty of up to \$7,000 for each violation.
3. [Section 17\(c\)](#) provides that, when the violation is specifically determined not to be of a serious nature, a proposed civil penalty of up to \$7,000 may be assessed for each violation.

4. [Section 17\(d\)](#) provides that any employer who fails to correct a violation for which a citation has been issued, may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$7,000 for each day during which such failure or violation continues.
5. [Section 17\(i\)](#) provides that, when a violation of a posting requirement is cited, a civil penalty of up to \$7,000 shall be assessed for each violation.

*NOTE: While OSHA proposes penalties, the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission assesses penalties.*

#### **B. Appropriation Act Restrictions.**

In providing funding for OSHA, Congress has placed restrictions on enforcement activities regarding two categories of employers: small farming operations and small employers in low-hazard industries. The Appropriations Act contains limits for OSH Act activities on a year-by-year basis.

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-051](#), Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act, issued May 28, 1998, for additional information. Appendix A of that directive contains the list of low-hazard industries, which is updated annually.*

#### **C. Minimum Penalties.**

The following policies apply:

1. The proposed penalty for any willful violation shall not be less than \$5,000. The \$5,000 penalty is a statutory minimum and not subject to administrative discretion. This minimum penalty applies to all willful violations, whether serious or other-than-serious.
2. When the proposed penalty for a serious violation (citation item) would amount to less than \$100, a \$100 penalty shall be proposed for that violation.
3. When the proposed penalty for an other-than-serious violation (citation item), or a regulatory violation other than a posting violation, would amount to less than \$100, no penalty shall be proposed for that violation.
4. If, however, there is a citation for a posting violation, a penalty shall be proposed even if less than \$100 since penalties for such violations are mandatory under the Act.



D. **Maximum Penalties.**

The civil penalty amounts included in [Section 17](#) are generally maximum amounts before any permissible reductions are taken.

Table 6-1 below summarizes the maximum amounts for proposed civil penalties:

**Table 6-1: Maximum Amounts for Civil Penalties**

Type of Violation	Penalty Maximum
Serious	\$7,000 per violation
Other-Than-Serious	\$7,000 per violation
Willful or Repeated	\$70,000 per violation
Posting Requirements	\$7,000 per violation
Failure to Abate	\$7,000 per day unabated beyond the abatement date [generally limited to 30 days maximum]

III. **Penalty Factors.**

[Section 17\(j\)](#) of the Act provides that penalties shall be assessed giving due consideration to four factors:

- ▶ The **gravity** of the violation;
- ▶ **Size** of the employer's business;
- ▶ The **good faith** of the employer; and
- ▶ The employer's **history** of previous violations.

A. **Gravity of Violation.**

The gravity of the violation is the **primary consideration** in determining penalty amounts. It shall be the basis for calculating the basic penalty for serious and other-than-serious violations. To determine the gravity of a violation, the following two assessments shall be made:

- ▶ The **severity** of the injury or illness which could result from the alleged violation.
- ▶ The **probability** that an injury or illness could occur as a result of the alleged violation.

1. **Severity Assessment.**

The classification of an alleged violation as serious or other-than-serious is based on the severity of the potential injury or illness and is the first step. The following categories shall be considered in assessing the severity of potential injuries or illnesses:

a. **For Serious:**

- **High Severity:** Death from injury or illness; injuries involving permanent disability; or chronic, irreversible illnesses.
- **Medium Severity:** Injuries or temporary, reversible illnesses resulting in hospitalization or a variable but limited period of disability.
- **Low Severity:** Injuries or temporary, reversible illnesses not resulting in hospitalization and requiring only minor supportive treatment.

b. **For Other-Than-Serious:**

**Minimal Severity:** Although such violations reflect conditions which have a direct and immediate relationship to the safety and health of employees, the most serious injury or illness that could reasonably be expected to result from an employee's exposure would not be low, medium or high severity and would not cause death or serious physical harm.

2. **Probability Assessment.**

The probability that an injury or illness will result from a hazard has no role in determining the classification of a violation, but does affect the amount of the proposed penalty.

a. Probability shall be categorized either as greater or as lesser.

- **Greater Probability:** Results when the likelihood that an injury or illness will occur is judged to be relatively high.
- **Lesser Probability:** Results when the likelihood that an injury or illness will occur is judged to be relatively low.

b. **How to Determine Probability.**

The following factors shall be considered, as appropriate, when violations are likely to result in injury or illness:

- Number of employees exposed;
- Frequency of exposure or duration of employee overexposure to contaminants;
- Employee proximity to the hazardous conditions;
- Use of appropriate personal protective equipment;
- Medical surveillance program;
- Youth and inexperience of employees, especially those under 18 years old; and
- Other pertinent working conditions.

**EXAMPLE 6-1:** Greater probability may include an employee exposed to the identified hazard for four hours a day, five days a week. Lesser probability may be present when an employee is performing a non-routine task with two previous exposures within the previous year and no injuries or illnesses are associated with the identified hazard.

c. **Final Probability Assessment.**

All of the factors outlined above shall be considered in determining a final probability assessment.

When adherence to the probability assessment procedures would result in an unreasonably high or low gravity, the assessment may be adjusted at the discretion of the Area Director as appropriate. Such decisions shall be fully explained in the case file.

3. **Gravity-Based Penalty (GBP).**

- a. The gravity-based penalty (GBP) for each violation shall be determined by combining the severity assessment and the final probability assessment.

- b. GBP is an unreduced penalty and is calculated in accordance with the procedures below.

*NOTE: Throughout the FOM when the term “unreduced penalty” is used, it is the same as GBP.*

4. **Serious Violation & GBP.**

- a. The gravity of a violation is defined by the GBP:
  - A **high gravity** violation is one with a GBP of \$5,000 or greater.
  - A **moderate gravity** violation is one with a GBP of \$2,000, \$2,500 or \$3,500.
  - A **low gravity** violation is one with a GBP of \$1,500.
- b. The highest gravity classification (high severity and greater probability) shall normally be reserved for the most serious violative conditions, such as those situations involving danger of death or extremely serious injury or illness.
- c. If the Area Director determines that it is appropriate to achieve the necessary deterrent effect, a GBP of \$7,000 may be proposed instead of \$5,000. Such discretion should be exercised based on the facts of the case. The reasons for this determination shall be fully explained in the case file.
- d. For serious violations, the GBP shall be assigned on the basis of the following scale in Table 6-2:

**Severity + Probability = GBP**

**Table 6-2: Serious Violations**

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Probability</b>	<b>GBP</b>	<b>Gravity</b>	<b>IMIS Code</b>
High	Greater	\$5,000 (or \$7,000)	High	10
Medium	Greater	\$3,500	Moderate	5
Low	Greater	\$2,500	Moderate	5
High	Lesser	\$2,500	Moderate	5
Medium	Lesser	\$2,000	Moderate	5

Low	Lesser	\$1,500	Low	1
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5. **Other-Than-Serious Violations & GBP.**

- a. For other-than-serious safety and health violations, there is only minimal severity.
- b. If the Area Director determines that it is appropriate to achieve the necessary deterrent effect, a GBP of \$7,000 may be proposed. Such discretion should be exercised based on the facts of the specific case. The reasons for this determination shall be fully explained in the case file.

**Table 6-3: Other-Than-Serious Violations**

Severity	Probability	GBP
Minimal	Greater	\$1,000 - \$7,000
Minimal	Lesser	\$0

6. **Exception to GBP Calculations.**

For some cases, a GBP may be assigned without using the severity and the probability assessment procedures outlined in this section when these procedures cannot appropriately be used. In such cases, the assessment assigned and the reasons for doing so shall be fully explained in the case file.

7. **Egregious Cases.**

In egregious cases, violation-by-violation penalties are applied. Such cases shall be handled in accordance with [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties*, dated October 21, 1990. Penalties calculated under this policy shall not be proposed without the concurrence of the Assistant Secretary and NSOL.

8. **Gravity Calculations for Combined or Grouped Violations.**

Combined or grouped violations will be considered as one violation with one GBP. The following procedures apply to the calculation of penalties for combined and grouped violations:

*NOTE: Multiple violations of a single standard may be **combined** into one citation item. When a hazard is identified which involves interrelated violations of different standards, the violations may be **grouped** into a single item.*

a. **Combined Violations.**

The severity and probability assessments for combined violations shall be based on the instance with the highest gravity. It is not necessary to complete the penalty calculations for each instance or sub item of a combined or grouped violation once the instance with the highest gravity is identified.

b. **Grouped Violations.**

The following shall be adhered to:

- **Grouped Severity Assessment**

There are two considerations for calculating the severity of grouped violations:

- The severity assigned to the grouped violation shall be no less than the severity of the most serious reasonably predictable injury or illness that could result from the violation of any single item; AND
- If the injury or illness that is reasonably predictable from the grouped items is more serious than that from any single violation item, the more serious injury or illness shall serve as the basis for the calculation of the severity factor.

- **Grouped Probability Assessment**

There are two factors for calculating the probability of grouped violations:

- The probability assigned to the grouped violation shall be no less than the probability of the item which is most likely to result in an injury or illness; AND
- If the overall probability of injury or illness is greater with the grouped violation than with any single violation item, the greater probability of

injury or illness shall serve as the basis for the calculation of the probability assessment.

**B. Penalty Reduction Factors.**

**1. General.**

- a. Penalty reductions may exceed 100 percent, depending upon the employer's "size" (number of employees), "good faith," and "history of previous violations."
  - A maximum of 60 percent (80 percent for serious willful violations) reduction is permitted for **size**;
  - A maximum of 35 percent reduction for **good faith**; and
  - 10 percent reduction may be given for **history**.
- b. However, no penalty reduction can be more than 100 percent of the initial assessment. Since these reduction factors are based on the general character of an employer's safety and health performance, they shall be calculated only once for each employer.
- c. After the classification (as serious or other-than-serious) and the gravity-based penalty have been determined for each violation, the penalty reduction factors (for size, good faith, history) shall be applied subject to the following limitations:
  - Penalties proposed for violations classified as **repeated** shall be reduced only for size.
  - Penalties proposed for violations classified as **willful**, shall be reduced only for size and history.
  - Penalties proposed for **serious** violations classified as high severity/greater probability **shall be reduced only for size and history**.

**2. Size Reduction.**

- a. A maximum penalty reduction of 60 percent is permitted for small employers (80 percent for serious willful violations, see [Table 6-6](#)). "Size of employer" shall be calculated on the basis of the maximum number of employees of an employer at **all**

workplaces nationwide, including State Plan States, at any one time during the previous 12 months.

- b. The rates of reduction to be applied are as follows.

<u>Employees</u>	<u>Percent reduction</u>
1-25	60
26-100	40
101-250	20
251 or more	None

- c. When an employer with 1-25 employees has one or more serious violations of high gravity or a number of serious violations of moderate gravity indicating a lack of concern for employee safety and health, the CSHO may recommend that only a partial reduction in penalty shall be permitted for size. If the Area Director approves the partial reduction, the justification is to be fully explained in the case file.

3. **Good Faith Reduction.**

A penalty reduction is permitted in recognition of an employer's effort to implement an effective safety and health management system in the workplace. The following apply to reductions for good faith:

a. **Reduction Not Permitted.**

- No reduction shall be given for **high gravity serious violations**.
- No reduction shall be given if a **willful violation** is found. Additionally, where a willful violation has been documented, no reduction for good faith can be applied to **any** of the violations found during the same inspection.
- No reduction shall be given for **repeated violations**. If a repeated violation is found, no reduction for good faith can be applied to **any** of the violations found during the same inspection.
- No reduction shall be given if a **failure to abate violation** is found during an inspection. No good faith



reduction shall be given for any violation in the inspection in which the FTA was found.

- No reduction shall be given to employers being cited under abatement verification for **failure to certify abatement**.
- No reduction shall be given to employers being cited under abatement verification for **failure to notify employees and tagging movable equipment**.
- No reduction shall be given if the employer has **no safety and health management system**, or if there are **major deficiencies** in the program.

b. **Twenty-Five Percent Reduction.**

A 25 percent reduction for “good faith” normally requires a written safety and health management system. In exceptional cases, CSHOs may recommend a full 25 percent reduction for employers with 1-25 employees who have implemented an effective safety and health management system, but has not reduced it to writing.

To qualify for this reduction, the employer’s safety and health management system must provide for:

- Appropriate management commitment and employee involvement;
- Worksite analysis for the purpose of hazard identification;
- Hazard prevention and control measures;
- Safety and health training; and
- Where **young persons** (i.e., less than 18 years old) are employed, the CSHO’s evaluation must consider whether the employer’s safety and health management system appropriately addresses the particular needs of such employees, relative to the types of work they perform and the potential hazards to which they may be exposed.

- Where **persons who speak limited or no English** are employed, the CSHO's evaluation must consider whether the employer's safety and health management system appropriately addresses the particular needs of such employees, relative to the types of work they perform and the potential hazards to which they may be exposed.

*NOTE: One example of an effective safety and health management system is given in Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines; Issuance of Voluntary Guidelines (Federal Register, January 16, 1989 ([54 FR 3904](#))).*

**c. Fifteen Percent Reduction.**

A 15 percent reduction for good faith shall normally be given if the employer has a documented and effective safety and health management system, with only incidental deficiencies.

**EXAMPLE 6-2:** An acceptable program should include minutes of employee safety and health meetings, documented employee safety and health training sessions, or any other evidence of measures advancing safety and health in the workplace.

**d. Ten Percent Additional Reduction for OSHA Strategic Partnership Participation.**

- OSHA may provide an additional 10 percent reduction for good faith **in addition to the normal available reductions** where the employer is an OSHA Strategic Partnership (OSP) site.
- Employers in OSP sites, must have taken specific significant steps beyond those mentioned in the Twenty-Five Percent Reduction, and has achieved a high level of employee protection.
- This benefit must be specified in the partnership (not all partnerships offer this benefit), **and** the employer must also be working toward the goals of the partnership in a demonstrable fashion, which would be observed through the verification process.

- In cases where the total penalty reduction is 100 percent or more, the minimum penalty provisions shall apply.
- This is an additional good faith reduction; it will not apply unless the employer first qualifies for the 25 percent reduction.

e. **Allowable Percentages.**

Only these percentages (15%, 25% or 35%) may be used to reduce penalties due to the employer's good faith; this includes the possible additional 10 percent reduction for qualifying participants in OSHA's OSP program.

4. **History Reduction.**

a. **Allowable Percent.**

A reduction of 10 percent shall be given to employers who have not been cited by OSHA nationwide, or by any State Plan state for any serious, willful, or repeated violations in the prior three years.

b. **Time Limitation and Final Order.**

The three-year history of no prior citations (both Federal and State) shall be calculated from the opening conference date of the current inspection. Only citations that have become a final order of the Commission within the three years immediately before the opening conference date shall be considered.

c. **Reduction Will Not be Given.**

- For a repeated violation, or
- To employers being cited for failure to certify abatement, or
- To employers being cited for failure to notify employees and tagging movable equipment.

5. **Total Reduction.**

The total reduction will normally be the sum of the reductions for each factor. Table 6-4 provides an overview of the percent of

penalty reductions applicable to serious, other-than-serious, and repeated violations.

6. **Penalty Table.**

Table 6-4 may be used for determining appropriate reduced penalties for serious and other-than-serious violations.

**Table 6-4: Penalty Table**

Percent Reduction	Penalty in Dollars							
	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
0	\$1,000	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$3,000	\$3,500	\$5,000	\$7,000
10	\$900	\$1,350	\$1,800	\$2,250	\$2,700	\$3,150	\$4,500	\$6,300
15	\$850	\$1,275	\$1,700	\$2,125	\$2,550	\$2,975	\$4,250*	\$5,950*
20	\$800	\$1,200	\$1,600	\$2,000	\$2,400	\$2,800	\$4,000	\$5,600
25	\$750	\$1,125	\$1,500	\$1,875	\$2,250	\$2,625	\$3,750*	\$5,250*
30	\$700	\$1,050	\$1,400	\$1,750	\$2,100	\$2,450	\$3,500	\$7,900
35	\$650	\$975	\$1,300	\$1,625	\$1,950	\$2,275	\$3,250*	\$4,550*
40	\$600	\$900	\$1,200	\$1,500	\$1,800	\$2,100	\$3,000	\$4,200
45	\$550	\$825	\$1,100	\$1,375	\$1,650	\$1,925	\$2,750*	\$3,850*
50	\$500	\$750	\$1,000	\$1,250	\$1,500	\$1,750	\$2,500	\$3,500
55	\$450	\$675	\$900	\$1,125	\$1,350	\$1,575	\$2,250*	\$3,150*
60	\$400	\$600	\$800	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$1,400	\$2,000	\$2,800
65	\$350	\$525	\$700	\$875	\$1,050	\$1,225	\$1,750*	\$2,450*
70	\$300	\$450	\$600	\$750	\$900	\$1,050	\$1,500	\$2,100
75	\$250	\$375	\$500	\$625	\$750	\$875	\$1,250*	\$1,750*
85	\$150	\$225	\$300	\$375	\$450	\$525	\$750*	\$1,050*
95	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$125	\$150	\$175	\$250*	\$350*

\* Starred figures represent penalty amounts that would not normally be proposed for high gravity serious violations because no reduction for good faith is made in such cases. They may occasionally be applicable for other-than-serious violations where the Area Director has determined a high unreduced penalty amount to be warranted.

**IV. Effect on Penalties if Employer Immediately Corrects.**

Appropriate penalties will be proposed with respect to an alleged violation even though, after being informed of the violation by the CSHO, the employer

immediately corrects or initiates steps to abate the hazard. In limited circumstances, this prompt abatement of a hazardous condition may be taken into account in determining the amount of the proposed penalties under the Quick-Fix penalty reduction.

**A. Quick-Fix Penalty Reduction.**

Quick-Fix is an abatement incentive program meant to encourage employers to immediately abate hazards found during an OSHA inspection and thereby quickly prevent potential employee injury, illness, and death. Quick-Fix does not apply to all violations. However, penalty reductions are permitted in certain circumstances where OSHA has determined that immediate abatement reduces the gravity of the violation.

**B. Quick-Fix Reduction Shall Apply to:**

1. All general industry, construction, maritime and agriculture employers.
2. All sizes of employers in all Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) codes and North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes.
3. Both safety and health violations, provided hazards are immediately abated during the inspection, once identified by the CSHO (e.g., on the day the condition was pointed out to the employer, or within 24 hours of being discovered by the CSHO).
4. Violations classified as other-than-serious, “low gravity serious” or “medium gravity serious.”
5. Individual violations, i.e., not to the citation or penalty as a whole.
6. Corrective actions that are permanent and substantial, not temporary or cosmetic (e.g., installing a guard on a machine rather than removing an employee from the zone of danger, including administrative controls, or other specific measures to abate a violation).

**C. Quick-Fix Reductions Shall Not Apply to:**

1. Violations classified as “high gravity serious,” “willful,” “repeated,” or “failure-to-abate.”
2. Violations related either to a fatal injury or illness, or to any incidents resulting in serious injuries to employees.

3. Blatant violations that are easily corrected (e.g., turning on a ventilation system to reduce employee exposure to a hazardous atmosphere, or putting on hard hats that are readily available at the workplace).

**D. Reduction Amount.**

1. A Quick-Fix penalty reduction of 15 percent shall be applied to an individual violation's GBP.
2. After the 15 percent Quick-Fix reduction is applied, the reductions for size, good faith, and history will then be applied. Table 6-5, below, provides an overview of the program.

**Table 6-5: Quick-Fix Penalty Reduction Factor**

<b>Reduction Factor</b>	<b>Restrictions</b>	<b>Application</b>	<b>Percent Reduction</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Quick -Fix</b>	No Reduction Factor for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Violations classified as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High gravity serious</li> <li>- Willful</li> <li>- Repeated</li> <li>- Failure to Abate penalty</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Violations related to a fatal injury or illness, or a serious incident resulting in serious injuries</li> <li>▪ Blatant violations that are easily corrected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All general industry, construction, maritime &amp; agriculture employers</li> <li>▪ All sizes of employers in all SIC/NAICS codes</li> <li>▪ Safety &amp; health violations, provided hazards are immediately abated during the inspection</li> <li>▪ Violations classified as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other-than-serious</li> <li>- Low gravity serious</li> <li>- Medium gravity serious</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Only to individual violations</li> <li>▪ Only to a corrective action that is permanent and substantial</li> </ul>	After the GBP has been calculated, a 15% reduction is applied.  <b>After the 15% Quick-Fix reduction is applied, the reductions for size, good faith, and history are applied.</b>	No penalty for a serious violation shall be less than \$100

## V. Repeated Violations.

### A. General.

1. Each repeated violation shall be evaluated as serious or other-than-serious, based on current workplace conditions, and not on hazards found in the prior case.
2. A Gravity-Based Penalty (GBP) shall then be calculated for repeated violations based on facts noted during the current inspection.
3. Only the reduction factor for size, appropriate to the facts at the time of the reinspection, shall be applied.

*NOTE: [Section 17\(a\)](#) of the Act provides that an employer who repeatedly violates the Act may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$70,000 for each violation.*

### B. Penalty Increase Factors.

The amount of any increase to a proposed penalty for repeated violations shall be determined by the size of the employer's business.

#### 1. Small Employers.

For employers with 250 or fewer employees nationwide, the GBP shall be multiplied by a factor of 2 for the first repeated violation and multiplied by 5 for the second repeated violation. The GBP may be multiplied by 10 in cases where the Area Director determines that it is necessary to achieve the deterrent effect. The reasons for imposing a high multiplier factor shall be explained in the file.

#### 2. Large Employers.

For employers with more than 250 employees nationwide, the GBP shall be multiplied by a factor of **5** for the first repeated violation and, by **10** for the second repeated violation.

### C. Other-than-Serious, No Initial Penalty.

For a repeated other-than-serious violation that otherwise would have no initial penalty, a GBP penalty of \$200 shall be proposed for the first repeated violation, \$500 for the second repeated violation, and \$1,000 for a third repetition.

*NOTE: These penalties shall not be subject to the Penalty Increase factors as discussed in [Paragraph V.B.](#) of this chapter.*

**D. Regulatory Violations.**

1. For calculating the GBP for regulatory violations, see Paragraph [III.A.5.](#) and [Section X.](#)
2. For repeated instances of regulatory violations, the initial penalty shall be multiplied by 2 for the first repeated violation and multiplied by 5 for the second repeated violation. If the Area Director determines that it is necessary to achieve the proper deterrent effect, the initial penalty may be multiplied by 10.

**VI. Willful Violations.**

[Section 17\(a\)](#) of the Act provides that an employer who willfully violates the Act may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$70,000 for each violation, but not less than \$5,000 for each violation. See *Minimum Penalties* at [Paragraph II.C.](#) of this chapter.

**A. General.**

1. Each willful violation shall be classified as serious or other-than-serious.
2. There shall be no reduction for good faith.
3. In no case shall the proposed penalty for a willful violation (serious or other-than-serious) after reductions be less than \$5,000.

**B. Serious Willful Penalty Reductions.**

The reduction factors for size for serious willful violations shall be applied as shown in the following chart. This chart helps minimize the impact of large penalties for small employers with 50 or fewer employees. However, in no case shall the proposed penalty be less than the statutory minimum, i.e., \$5,000 for these employers.

*NOTE: For violations that are not serious willful, use the size chart in [Paragraph III.B.2.](#)*



Employees	Percent reduction
10 or fewer	80
11-20	60
21-30	50
31-40	40
41-50	30
51-100	20
101-250	10
251 or more	0

The reduction factor for history shall be applied.

The proposed penalty shall then be determined from Table 6-6.

**Table 6-6: Penalties to be Proposed for Serious Willful Violations**

Total percent reduction for size and/or history	High Gravity	Moderate Gravity	Low Gravity
0%	\$70,000	\$55,000	\$40,000
10%	\$63,000	\$49,500	\$36,000
20%	\$56,000	\$44,000	\$32,000
30%	\$49,000	\$38,500	\$28,000
40%	\$42,000	\$33,000	\$24,000
50%	\$35,000	\$27,500	\$20,000
60%	\$28,000	\$22,000	\$16,000
70%	\$21,000	\$16,500	\$12,000
80%	\$14,000	\$11,000	\$8,000
90%	\$7,000	\$5,500	\$5,000

**C. Willful Regulatory Violations.**

1. For calculating the GBP for regulatory violations, see [Paragraph III.A.5.](#) and [Section X](#) for other-than-serious violations.
2. In the case of regulatory violations that are determined to be willful, the GBP penalty shall be multiplied by 10. In no event shall the penalty, after reduction for size and history, be less than \$5,000.

## VII. Penalties for Failure to Abate.

### A. General.

1. Failure to Abate penalties shall be proposed when:
  - a. A previous citation issued to an employer has become a final order of the Commission; and
  - b. The condition, hazard or practice found upon re-inspection is the same for which the employer was originally cited and has never been corrected by the employer (i.e., the violation was continuous).
2. The citation has to have become a final order of the Review Commission. Citations become a final order of the Review Commission when the abatement date for that item passes, if the employer has not filed a notice of contest prior to that abatement date.
3. See [Chapter 15, Legal Issues](#), for information on determining final dates of uncontested citations, settlements and Review Commission decisions.

### B. Calculation of Additional Penalties.

#### 1. Unabated Violations.

A GBP for unabated violations is to be calculated for failure to abate a serious or other-than-serious violation on the basis of the facts noted upon reinspection. This recalculated GBP, however, shall not be less than that proposed for the item when originally cited.

- a. EXCEPTION: When the CSHO believes and documents in the case file that the employer has made a good faith effort to correct the violation and had an objective reasonable belief that it was fully abated, the Area Director may reduce or eliminate the daily proposed penalty.
- b. For egregious cases see [CPL 02-00-080, Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties](#), dated October 21, 1990.

2. **No Initial Proposed Penalty.**

In instances where no penalty was initially proposed, an appropriate penalty shall be determined after consulting with the Area Director. In no case shall the GBP be less than \$1,000 per day.

3. **Size Only Permissible Reduction Factor.**

Only the reduction factor for size – based upon the circumstances noted during the reinspection – shall be applied to arrive at the daily proposed penalty.

4. **Daily Penalty Multiplier.**

The daily proposed penalty shall be multiplied by the number of calendar days that the violation has continued unabated, except as provided below:

- a. The number of days unabated shall be counted from the day following the abatement date specified in the citation or the final order. It will include all calendar days between that date and the date of reinspection, excluding the date of reinspection.
- b. Normally the maximum total proposed penalty for failure to abate a particular violation shall not exceed **30** times the amount of the daily proposed penalty.
- c. At the discretion of the Area Director, a lesser penalty may be proposed. The reasoning for the lesser penalty shall be fully explained (e.g., achievement of an appropriate deterrent effect) in the case file.
- d. If a penalty in excess of the normal maximum amount of **30** times the amount of the daily proposed penalty is deemed necessary by the Area Director to deter continued non-abatement, the case shall be treated pursuant to the violation-by-violation (egregious) penalty procedures established in [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties*, dated October 21, 1990.

C. **Partial Abatement.**

1. When a citation has been partially abated, the Area Director may authorize a reduction of 25 to 75 percent to the amount of the proposed penalty calculated as outlined above.

2. When a violation consists of a number of instances and the follow-up inspection reveals that only some instances of the violation have been corrected, the additional daily proposed penalty shall take into consideration the extent of the abatement efforts.

**EXAMPLE 6-3:** Where three out of five instances have been corrected, the daily proposed penalty (calculated as outlined above, without regard to any partial abatement) may be reduced by 60 percent.

## **VIII. Violation-by-Violation (Egregious) Penalty Policy.**

### **A. Penalty Procedure.**

Each instance of noncompliance shall be considered a separate violation with individual proposed penalties for each violation. This procedure is known as the egregious or violation-by-violation penalty procedure.

### **B. Case Handling.**

Such cases shall be handled in accordance with [CPL02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties*, dated October 21, 1990.

### **C. Calculation of Penalties.**

Penalties calculated using the violation-by-violation policy shall not be proposed without the concurrence of the Assistant Secretary.

## **IX. Significant Enforcement Actions.**

### **A. Definition.**

A significant enforcement action (aka significant case) is one which results from an investigation in which the total proposed penalty is \$100,000 or more.

### **B. Multi-employer Worksites.**

Several related inspections involving the same employer, or involving more than one employer in the same location (such as multi-employer worksites) and submitted together, may also be considered to be a significant enforcement action if the total aggregate penalty is \$100,000 or more.

**C. Federal Agency Significant Cases.**

For Federal Agencies, the action is considered significant if penalties of \$100,000 or more would have been applied if it were a private sector employer.

1. Significant Federal Agency cases shall be developed, documented, and reviewed with the same rigorousness required for private sector cases.
2. In addition, Notices of Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions in Federal Agency cases shall be issued no later than six months from the date of the opening conference, thereby paralleling the six month statutory limit in private sector cases set by the OSH Act.

**D. Assistant Secretary Concurrence.**

The Assistant Secretary's concurrence is normally required for issuing citations in significant enforcement cases.

**X. Penalty and Citation Policy for Part 1903 and 1904 Regulatory Requirements.**

[Section 17\(i\)](#) of the Act provides that any employer who violates any of the posting requirements shall be assessed a civil penalty of up to \$7,000 for each violation (this includes recordkeeping violations). The following policy and procedure document must also be consulted for an in-depth review of these policies: [CPL 02-00-111](#), *Citation Policy for Paperwork and Written Program Requirement Violations*, issued November 27, 1995. Gravity-Based Penalties (GBPs) for regulatory violations, including posting requirements, shall be reduced for size and history (excluding willful violations, see [Chapter 4, Section V](#), *Willful Violations*).

**A. Posting Requirements Under Part 1903.**

Penalties for violation of posting requirements shall be proposed as follows:

**1. Failure to Post the OSHA Notice (Poster) – §1903.2(a).**

A citation for failure to post the OSHA Notice is warranted if:

- a. The pattern of violative conditions for a particular establishment demonstrates a consistent disregard for the employer's responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (Act); AND

- b. Interviews show that employees are unaware of their rights under the Act; OR
- c. The employer has been previously cited or advised by OSHA of the posting requirement.

If the criteria above are met and the employer has not displayed (posted) the notice furnished by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration as prescribed in [§1903.2\(a\)](#), an other-than-serious citation shall normally be issued. The GBP for this alleged violation shall be \$1,000.

2. **Failure to Post a Citation - §1903.16.**

- a. If an employer received a citation that was not posted as prescribed in [§1903.16](#), an other-than-serious citation shall normally be issued. The GBP shall be \$3,000.
- b. For information regarding the OSHA-300A form, see [CPL 02-00-135](#), *Recordkeeping Policies and Procedures Manual*, December 30, 2004.

B. **Advance Notice of Inspection – §1903.6.**

When an employer has received advance notice of an inspection and fails to notify the authorized employee representative as required by [§1903.6](#), an other-than-serious citation shall be issued. The violation shall have a GBP of \$2,000.

C. **Abatement Verification Regulation Violations – §1903.19.**

1. **General.**

- a. The penalty provisions of [Section 9](#) and [Section 17](#) of the OSH Act apply to all citations issued under this regulation. Only the reduction factor for size shall apply when assessing penalties.
- b. See [Chapter 7](#), *Post-Citation Inspection Procedures and Abatement Verification*, for detailed guidance.

2. **Penalty for Failing to Certify Abatement.**

- a. A penalty for failing to submit abatement certification documents, [§1903.19\(c\)\(1\)](#), shall be \$1,000, reduced only for size.

- b. A penalty for failure to submit abatement verification documents will not exceed the penalty for the entire original citation.
  - c. No “Good Faith” or “History” reductions shall be given to employers cited for failure to certify abatement.
3. **Penalty for Failing to Notify and Tagging.**
- a. Penalties for not notifying employees and tagging movable equipment [§1903.19](#) [paragraphs (g)(1), (g)(2), (g)(4), (i)(1), (i)(2), (i)(3), (i)(5) and (i)(6)] will follow the same penalty structure (GBP of \$3,000) as for Failure to Post a Citation.
  - b. No “Good Faith” or “History” reductions shall be given to employers for failure to notify employees and tagging movable equipment.

D. **Injury and Illness Records and Reporting under Part 1904.**

- 1. [Part 1904](#) violations are always other-than-serious.
- 2. Repeated and Willful penalty policies in paragraphs V.D. and VI.C., respectively, of this Chapter, may be applied to recordkeeping violations.
- 3. OSHA’s egregious penalty policy may be applied to recordkeeping violations. See [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties*, October 21, 1990.
- 4. See [CPL 02-00-135](#), *Recordkeeping Policies and Procedures Manual*, dated December 30, 2004; specifically Chapter 2, Section II, *Inspection and Citation Procedures*.

XI. **Failure to Provide Access to Medical and Exposure Records – §1910.1020.**

A. **Proposed Penalties.**

If an employer is cited for failing to provide access to records as required under [§1910.1020](#) for inspection and copying by any employee, former employee, or authorized representative of employees, a GBP of \$1,000 shall normally be proposed for each record (i.e., either medical record or exposure record, on an individual employee basis). A maximum GBP of \$7,000 may be proposed for such violations. See [CPL 02-02-072](#),

*Rules of Agency Practice and Procedure Concerning OSHA Access to Employee Medical Records*, dated August 22, 2007.

**EXAMPLE 6-4:** If the evidence demonstrates that an authorized employee representative requests both exposure and medical records for three employees and the request was denied by the employer, a citation would be issued for six instances (i.e., one medical record and one exposure record (total two) for each of three employees) of a violation of [§1910.1020](#), with a GBP of \$6,000.

**B. Use of Violation-by-Violation Penalties.**

The above policy does not preclude the use of violation-by-violation or per employee penalties where higher penalties are appropriate. See [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-By-Violation Penalties*, October 21, 1990.

**XII. Criminal Penalties.**

**A. OSH Act and U.S. Code.**

The Act and the U.S. Code provide for criminal penalties in the following cases:

1. Willful violation of an OSHA standard, rule, or order causing the death of an employee; [Section 17\(e\)](#);
2. Giving unauthorized advance notice; [Section 17\(f\)](#);
3. Knowingly giving false information; [Section 17\(g\)](#); and
4. Killing of a CSHO while engaged in the performance of investigative, inspection or law enforcement functions; [Section 17\(h\)\(2\)](#).

**B. Courts.**

Criminal penalties are imposed by the courts after trials and not OSHA or the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

**XIII. Handling Monies Received from Employers.**

**A. Responsibility of the Area Director.**

Pursuant to its statutory authority, it is OSHA policy to collect all penalties owed to the government. The Area Director is responsible for:



1. Informing employers of OSHA's debt collection procedures;
2. Collecting assessed penalties from employers;
3. Reporting penalty amounts collected and those due;
4. Calculating interest and other charges on overdue penalty amounts;
5. Referring cases with uncollected penalties to the Office of Financial Management Debt Collection Accountability Team (DCAT);
6. Transferring selected cases to the RSOL for legal action and subsequently tracking such cases;
7. Mailing collected monies in accordance with the procedures set forth in this chapter and in other OSHA Instructions; and
8. Reviewing the DOL bankruptcy logs emailed by DCAT.

**B. Receiving Payments.**

The Area Director shall be guided by the following with regard to penalty payments:

1. **Methods of Payment.**

Employers assessed penalties shall remit the total payment to the Area Office by certified check, personal check, company check, postal money order, bank draft or bank money order, payable to the **DOL-OSHA**. Payment in cash shall not be accepted. Upon request of the employer and for good cause, alternate methods of payment are permissible, such as payments in installments.

2. **Identifying Payment.**

The Reporting I.D. of the Area Office, along with the Inspection Number(s), **MUST BE PLACED** in the upper left or lower left hand corner of the face of the payment instrument. The date of receipt **MUST BE STAMPED** on the face of the check and in the upper right corner if possible.

3. **Adjustment to Payments.**

The following adjustments shall be made prior to transmitting the payment instrument to the Lockbox Depository. See [Paragraph XIII.B.6](#) of this chapter, *Depositing Payments*.

- a. If the payment instrument is not dated, the date received shall be entered as the date of payment.
- b. If the payment instrument has differing numeric and written amounts, the written amount shall be credited and the instrument deposited. If the written amount is obviously incorrect or differs from the amount referenced in the accompanying correspondence, the payment instrument shall be returned to the employer via certified mail for correction.
- c. If the payment instrument does not include the establishment name, the name shall be inserted on the face of the payment instrument.
- d. If the payment instrument includes the notation, "Payment in Full," whether or not the notation is incorrect, the payment shall be deposited.
- e. If the payment instrument is unsigned, the payment shall be deposited.
- f. If an employer mistakenly makes the payment payable to an official of OSHA by name, it shall be endorsed as follows:
  - Postal Money Orders – follow instruction on reverse of the money order.
  - All others – enter on reverse:

Pay to the order of the U.S. Department of Labor –  
OSHA

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Typewritten name of payee) (Signature)

4. **Incorrect, Unhonored, or Foreign Payments.**

a. Incorrectly dated payments shall be handled as follows:

- If the payment instrument is dated 10 days or more after the date of receipt, it is to be returned to the employer.
- If the payment instrument is dated less than 10 but more than 3 days after the date of receipt, it is to be held for deposit on the day it is dated.
- Payment instruments dated 3 or fewer days after the date of receipt are to be mailed to the Lockbox.
- If the payment instrument is dated more than six months prior to the current date, it is to be returned to the employer via certified mail.

b. Payment instruments which have been returned to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) without payment, due to insufficient funds, shall be forwarded to the Area Office for return to the employer via certified mail.

c. Payments drawn on non-U.S. banks **MUST BE SENT** directly to OFM (without using the "Lockbox" procedures described in [Paragraph XIII.B.6.](#) of. of this chapter, *Depositing Payments*) at the following address:

Office of Financial Management  
U.S. Department of Labor – OSHA  
Post Office Box 2422  
Washington, D.C. 20013

5. **Endorsing Payments.**

All payment instruments shall be endorsed as follows:

16-01-2012  
Payment FRB or BR Credit  
Treasury U.S, Payment on an  
Obligation to U.S. and must be  
paid at Par DO NOT WIRE NON  
PAYMENT  
U.S. DEPT. OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
DOL OSHA Washington DC

6. **Depositing Payments.**

All payments shall be kept in a safe place and, unless otherwise indicated, transmitted daily in accordance with current IMIS procedures to the Lockbox Depository at the following address:

U.S. Department of Labor - OSHA  
Post Office Box 70964  
Charlotte, NC 28272-0964

7. **Records.**

A copy of the penalty payment instrument shall be included in the case file. Additional accounting records shall also be included in the case file in accordance with current procedures.

C. **Refunds.**

In cases of later penalty modifications by OSHA or by the Commission or a court, refunds to the employer shall be made by the Department of Labor through DCAT. The Area Director shall notify DCAT in accordance with current instructions.

**XIV. Debt Collection Procedures.**

A. **Policy.**

[The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996](#) (DCIA) provides for the assessment of interest, administrative charges, and additional costs for nonpayment of debts arising under the OSHA program. Under the regulations of the Department of Labor implementing the DCIA, penalties assessed by OSHA are considered as debts. It is OSHA policy to exercise the authority provided under the DCIA to assess additional charges on delinquent debts. It is also OSHA policy to forbear collection of penalties until the employer has exhausted its right to challenge them administratively, as well as in all legal forums.

B. **Time Allowed for Payment of Penalties.**

The date when penalties become due and payable depends on whether or not the employer contests.

1. **Uncontested Penalties.**

When citations and/or proposed penalties are uncontested, the penalties are due and payable 15 working days following the employer's receipt of the Citation and Notification of Penalty or, in the case of Informal Settlement Agreements, 15 working days after the date of the last signature unless a later due date for payment of penalties is agreed upon in the settlement.

2. **Contested Penalties.**

When citations and/or proposed penalties are contested, the date penalties are due and payable will depend upon whether the case is resolved by a settlement agreement, an administrative law judge decision, a Commission decision, or a court judgment. See [Chapter 15, Section XIII](#), *Citation Final Order Dates*, for additional information.)

*NOTE: The Area Director shall forward the notice of contest and the case file to the RSOL with a transmittal letter informing the Solicitor that any resulting penalty must be directed to the Area Office for payment.*

3. **Partially Contested Penalties.**

When only part of a citation and/or a proposed penalty is contested, the due date for payment as stated in paragraph [XIV.B.1](#), *Uncontested Penalties*, shall be used for the uncontested items and the due date stated in [Paragraph XIV.B.2](#), *Contested Penalties*, for the contested items.

*NOTE: This provision notwithstanding, formal debt collection procedures will not be initiated in partially contested cases until a final order for the outstanding citation items has been issued.*

C. **Notification Procedures.**

It is OSHA policy to notify employers (the "Notice") that debts are payable and due, and to inform them of OSHA's debt collection procedures prior to assessing any applicable delinquent charges. A copy of the "Notice" stating OSHA's debt collection policy, including assessment of interest, additional charges for nonpayment and administrative costs, shall be included with each Citation and Notification of Proposed Penalty, OSHA-2 Form, sent to employers. Interest rates and administrative costs are published annually and may be revised quarterly by the Secretary of the Treasury. DCAT shall advise Area Directors of any

changes in the interest rate as they occur. A copy of the "Notice" shall be retained in the case file.

**D. Notification of Overdue Debt.**

The Area Director shall send a demand letter to the employer when the debt has become delinquent and shall retain a copy of the demand letter in the case file. A debt becomes delinquent **30 calendar days after the due date**, which is the same as the **final order date** as stated in [Chapter 15, Section XIII](#), *Citation Final Order Dates*.

**1. Uncontested Case with Penalties.**

If payment of any applicable penalty is not received within 30 calendar days after the date of the expiration of the 15 working day contest period, or 15 working days after the date of the last signature (unless a later due date for payment of penalties is agreed upon in the settlement) if an Informal Settlement Agreement has been signed, a demand letter shall be mailed.

**2. Contested Case with Penalties.**

If payment of any applicable penalty is not received within 30 calendar days after the Review Commission's **Order** approving a Formal Settlement Agreement, 60 calendar days after the **Notice of Docketing**, 90 calendar days after the **Notice of Commission Decision**, or 120 calendar days after date of the judgment of a U.S. Court of Appeals, and no appeal of the case has been filed by either OSHA or the employer, the Area Director shall either send a demand letter or a letter notifying the employer that the OSHA fine is past due (without assessing late fees and updating the IMIS as if a default letter had been sent).

**3. Exceptions to Sending the Demand Letter.**

The demand letter will not be sent in the following circumstances:

- a. The employer is currently making payments under an approved installment plan or other satisfactory payment arrangement. Such plan or arrangement shall be set forth in writing and signed by the employer and the Area Director.

*NOTE: If the employer enters into a **written** plan establishing a set payment schedule within one calendar month of the due date, but subsequently fails to make a payment within one calendar month of its scheduled due date, a payment default*

*letter shall be sent to the employer. If the employer fails to respond satisfactorily to that letter within one month, the unpaid portion of the debt shall be handled in accordance with [Paragraph XIV.F.](#), Assessment Procedures.*

- b. The employer has partially contested the case (even if the penalty has not been contested). In such circumstances a demand letter shall not be sent until a final order has been issued.

E. **Assessment of Additional Charges.**

Additional charges shall be assessed in accordance with the Debt Collection Improvement Act ([31 USC 3717](#)) and Department of Labor Regulations ([29 CFR 20](#)).

1. **Interest.**

Interest on the unpaid principal amount shall be assessed on a monthly basis at the current annual rate if the debt has not been paid within one calendar month of the date on which the debt (penalty) became due and payable (i.e., the date of the final order). Interest is not assessed if an acceptable repayment schedule has been established in a written plan by the due date.

*NOTE: Interest and delinquent charges are not compounded; only the unpaid balance of the penalty amount is used to calculate these additional charges.*

2. **Delinquent Charges.**

Delinquent charges shall be assessed on a monthly basis if the debt has not been paid within 3 calendar months of the delinquent date (which is one calendar month after the due date). Debts paid in full within 3 calendar months of the delinquent date shall not be assessed a delinquent charge. Delinquent charges accrue at the annual rate of 6 percent (0.5 percent per month).

*NOTE: Although the delinquent charge is not initially assessed until 3 calendar months after the debt became delinquent (4 calendar months after the due date), it is nevertheless calculated from the delinquent date. Thus, the first assessment of a delinquent charge will amount to a 3-month charge or 1.5 percent of the outstanding principal amount. Each month after that, the additional delinquent charge will be 0.5 percent of the unpaid principal.*

3. **Administrative Costs.**

Administrative costs shall be assessed for each demand letter sent in an attempt to collect the unpaid debt. Costs are not assessed for payment default letters.

F. **Assessment Procedures.**

If the penalty has not been paid by the delinquent date (i.e., within one calendar month of the due date), the Area Director shall implement the following procedures:

1. Interest shall be assessed at the current interest rate on the unpaid balance of the debt. The rate of interest shall remain fixed for the duration of the debt.

*NOTE: Interest is to be calculated for one month and shall be assessed on the date on which such charges become payable. Any later additional charges will not be assessed until the first of the month following the date on which the charge becomes payable. For example, if interest becomes payable on the twentieth of the month and the second demand letter is not sent out until the eighth of the following month, only one month's interest is assessed.*

2. The demand letter shall be sent to the employer requesting immediate payment of the debt. The demand letter shall show the total amount of the debt, including the unpaid penalty amount, interest and administrative costs.
3. Employers may respond to the demand letter in several ways:
  - a. The entire debt may be paid. In such cases no further collection action is necessary.
  - b. A repayment plan may be submitted or offered; after a set payment schedule has been approved by the Area Director, no additional charges shall be levied against the debt as long as payments are timely made in accordance with the approved schedule. See note under [Paragraph XIV.D.3.a.](#) of this chapter, *Exceptions to Sending Demand Letter*. If payments are not made on schedule, the unpaid portion of the debt shall be treated in accordance with [Paragraph XIV.F.](#)



- c. A partial payment may be made; the unpaid portion of the debt shall be treated in accordance with [Paragraph XIV.F.](#) of this chapter.
4. If any portion of the debt remains unpaid after one calendar month from the time the demand letter was sent to the employer, the Area Director shall institute one of the following:
  - a. Outstanding debts less than \$100 may be written off.
  - b. If the employer made a payment after receiving the demand, letter the area office may:
    - Send a receipt letter or contact the employer to request the balance due on the debt
    - Refer the case to DCAT
  - c. Outstanding debts with a current debt of \$100 or more shall be referred to DCAT.
5. After a case has been referred to DCAT for collection, the Area Director has no further responsibilities with regard to penalty collection related to that case.
6. If, after a case has been referred to DCAT, the employer mistakenly sends a payment to the Area Office, the case is subsequently contested, or new information regarding the debt or employer is obtained, the Area Director shall contact DCAT immediately.
7. DCAT shall update the host database to reflect all penalty collection actions taken by the National Office. Detailed information on subsequent debt collection activity on each case is available on the OSHA Intranet website. A written communication outlining collection actions taken for each case referred to DCAT shall be sent to the Area Office upon completion of National Office and Treasury debt collection procedures for that case.
8. The responsibility for closing the case remains with the Area Director. Once final collection action has been completed, the case may be closed whenever appropriate.

**G. Application of Payments.**

Payments that are for less than the full amount of the debt shall be applied to satisfy the following categories in order of priority:

1. Administrative charges;
2. Delinquent charges;
3. Interest;
4. Outstanding principal.

**H. Uncollectible Penalties.**

There may be cases where a penalty cannot be collected, regardless of any action that has been or may be undertaken. Examples might be when a demand letter is not deliverable, a company is no longer in business and has no successor, or the employer is bankrupt. In such cases, the Area Director **shall notify** DCAT by phone or email prior to referring the case to the National Office. DCAT will then advise what further collection action is appropriate. The database shall be updated following current IMIS procedures to reflect the most recent action. In bankruptcy cases, the Area Director may also seek the advice of the RSOL to determine whether to file as a creditor under the Bankruptcy Act.

**I. National Office Debt Collection Procedures.**

Upon receipt of a case from an Area Director, DCAT shall verify the amount of the outstanding debt and proceed to implement National Office debt collection procedures.

**1. Demand Letter.**

In accordance with the [Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996](#) (DCIA), unless a debt meets certain exemption criteria, it must be referred to the Department of Treasury within 180 days after the debt becomes delinquent. The DCIA also requires that the debtor be notified that the debt may be referred to Treasury and what debt collection actions Treasury may take regarding the debt. This information is included in the demand letter DCAT sends to the employer, notifying him/her of the overdue debt and requesting immediate payment to DCAT.

2. **Exemptions Criteria for Referral to Treasury.**

Debts may be exempt from the DCIA requirement if the case is in litigation by the Solicitor, in bankruptcy, in contest or on appeal.

3. **Referral to the Department of Treasury.**

In accordance with the DCIA, if the debt remains uncollected sixty days from the date the DCAT demand letter was sent, the case may be referred to the Department of Treasury. Treasury actions include: referral to private debt collection firms; reporting to commercial credit reporting agencies; referral to the Internal Revenue Service for collection by offset; referral to the Department of Treasury Offset Program where collection is done by offset from payments due the debtor by any Federal agency; and/or litigation. In addition, Treasury will add their collection fees to the debt.

- a. Any penalty settlement offer received by Treasury shall be referred to the Area Director for approval.
- b. All penalty amounts collected by Treasury beyond their collection fees will be applied to the employer's penalty account.
- c. Any disputes received by Treasury will be forwarded to DCAT and may be sent to the Area Director for response.

4. **Updating the Database.**

DCAT shall update the database to reflect all specific debt collection actions taken since referral to the National Office and indicate if the case has been returned to the Area Office.

5. **Compromise of Debts over \$100,000.**

Debts of \$100,000 or more, exclusive of interest, delinquent charges, and administrative costs, cannot be waived by OSHA without Justice or Treasury approval. DCAT will obtain this approval before returning the debt to the Area Office.

6. **Return to the Area Office.**

Once it has been decided to return the collection action, DCAT shall prepare a written transmittal memorandum to the Area Director stating the final status of the debt and what actions should

be taken. Included with the memo will be copies of the DCAT case documents or correspondence. Electronic copies of each National Office Letter will also be maintained by DCAT. Information on each closed case remains available on the OSHA Intranet website. Information regarding Treasury Debt Management Service activity on closed cases as well as check copies from the Federal Reserve are also available electronically through DCAT.

## Chapter 7

### POST-CITATION PROCEDURES AND ABATEMENT VERIFICATION

#### I. Contesting Citations, Notifications of Penalty or Abatement Dates.

CSHOs shall advise the employer that the citation, the penalty and/or the abatement date may be contested in cases where the employer does not agree to the citation, penalty or abatement date or any combination of these.

##### A. Notice of Contest.

CSHOs shall inform employers that if they intend to contest, the Area Director must be notified in writing and such notification must be postmarked no later than the 15th working day after receipt of the citation and notification of penalty (working days are Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays), otherwise the citation becomes a final order of the Commission. See [§1903.17](#). The agency has no authority to modify the contest period. Employers may also be apprised that their notice of contest can be sent electronically via email to the Area Director within the 15 working day period and provide employers the email address(es). It shall be emphasized that oral notices of contest do not satisfy the requirement to give written notification.

*NOTE: Upon receipt of all electronic notices of contest, the Assistant Area Director or Area Director shall print copies of the email notice and include it in the documents and files to be transmitted to the Review Commission and the RSOL's office. Contest emails are not to be electronically forwarded to the Commission or RSOL. Area Offices are encouraged to establish procedures to ensure ready access to email accounts designated to receive notices of contest to ensure the timely transmission of copies to the Commission and RSOL. OSHA's acceptance of notices of contest via email shall not be interpreted to mean that the agency has consented to, or accepted, the electronic service of documents in litigation pursuant to Commission Rule [§2200.7](#).*

1. An employer's Notice of Intent to Contest must clearly state what is specifically being contested. It must identify which item(s) of the citation, penalty, the abatement date, or any combination of these is being objected to. CSHOs shall ask the employer to read the OSHA-3000 pamphlet accompanying the citation for additional details.

- a. If the employer only requests a later abatement date and there are valid grounds to consider the request, the Area Director should be contacted. The Area Director may issue an amended citation changing an abatement date prior to the expiration of the 15 working day period.
  - b. If the employer contests only the penalty or some of the citation items, all uncontested items must still be abated by the dates indicated on the citation and the corresponding penalties paid within 15 days of notification.
2. CSHOs shall inform the employer that the Act provides that employees or their authorized representative(s) have the right to contest in writing any or all of the abatement dates set for a violation if they believe the date(s) to be unreasonable.

#### B. **Contest Process.**

The CSHO shall explain that when a Notice of Intent to Contest is properly filed (i.e., received in the Area Office and postmarked as described in the [note to A.1.](#) of this chapter), the Area Director is required to forward the case to an independent adjudicatory agency, (Review Commission) at which time the case is considered to be in litigation.

1. OSHA will normally cease all investigatory activities once an employer has filed a notice of contest. Any action relating to a contested case must first have the concurrence of the RSOL.
2. Upon receipt of the Notice of Intent to Contest, the Review Commission assigns the case to an administrative law judge, who will schedule a hearing in a public place close to the workplace.

## II. **Informal Conferences.**

### A. **General.**

1. Pursuant to [§1903.20](#), the employer, any affected employee, or the employee representative may request an informal conference for the purpose of discussing any issues raised by an inspection, citation, notice of proposed penalty, or notice of intention to contest.
2. The informal conference will be conducted within the 15 working day contest period. The conference or any request for such a conference shall not operate as a stay of the 15 working day contest period.

3. If the employer's intent to contest is not clear, the Area Director or designated representative will make an effort contact the employer for clarification.
4. Informal conferences may be held by any means practical, but meeting in person is preferred.

**B. Assistance of Counsel.**

In the event that an employer is bringing its attorney to an informal conference, the Area Director or his or her designee may contact the RSOL's Office and ask for the assistance of counsel.

**C. Opportunity to Participate.**

1. If an informal conference is requested by the employer, an affected employee or his representative shall be afforded the opportunity to participate. If the conference is requested by an employee or an employee representative, the employer shall be afforded an opportunity to participate.
2. If the affected employee or employee representative chooses not to participate in the informal conference, an attempt will be made to contact that party and to solicit their input prior to the informal conference. Attempts to contact the party should be noted in the case file.

*NOTE: In the event of a settlement, it is not necessary to have the employee representative sign the informal settlement agreement.*

3. If any party objects to the attendance of another party or the Area Director believes that a joint informal conference would not be productive, separate informal conferences may be held.
4. During the conduct of a joint informal conference, separate or private discussions will be permitted if either party so requests.

**D. Notice of Informal Conferences.**

Area Director shall document in the case file notification to the parties of the date, time and location of the informal conference. In addition, the Case File Diary Sheet shall indicate the date of the informal conference.

E. **Posting Requirement.**

1. The Area Director will ask the employer at the beginning of the informal conference whether the form in the citation package indicating the date, time, and location of the conference has been posted as required.
2. If the employer has not posted the form, the Area Director may postpone the informal conference until such action is taken.

F. **Conduct of the Informal Conference.**

The informal conference will be conducted in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. **Conference Subjects.**
  - a. Purpose of the informal conference;
  - b. Rights of participants;
  - c. Contest rights and time constraints;
  - d. Limitations, if any;
  - e. Potential for settlements of citations; and
  - f. Other relevant information (e.g., if no employee or employee representative has responded, whether the employer has posted the notification form regarding the informal conference, etc.).
2. **Subjects Not to be Addressed.**
  - a. No opinions regarding the legal merits of an employer's case shall be expressed during the informal conference.
  - b. There should be no discussion with employers or employee representatives concerning the potential for referral of fatality inspections to the Department of Justice for criminal prosecution under the Act.
3. **Closing Remarks.**
  - a. At the conclusion of the conference, all main issues and potential courses of action will be summarized and documented.



- b. A copy of the summary, together with any other relevant notes of the discussion made by the Area Director, will be placed in the case file.

### **III. Petition for Modification of Abatement Date (PMA).**

An employer may file a petition for modification of abatement date when it has made a good faith effort to comply with abatement requirements, but such abatement has not been completed due to circumstances beyond its control. See [§1903.14a](#). If the employer requests additional abatement time after the 15 working day contest period has passed, the following procedures for PMAs are to be observed:

#### **A. Filing.**

A PMA must be filed in writing with the Area Director who issued the citation no later than the close of the next working day following the date on which abatement was originally required.

1. If a PMA is submitted orally, the employer shall be informed that OSHA cannot accept an oral PMA and that a written petition must be mailed by the end of the next working day after the abatement date. If there is not sufficient time to file a written petition, the employer shall be informed of the requirements below for late filing of the petition.
2. A late petition may be accepted only if accompanied by the employer's statement of exceptional circumstances explaining the delay.

#### **B. Where Filing Requirements Are Not Met.**

If the employer's written PMA does not meet all the requirements of [§1903.14a\(b\)\(1\)-\(5\)](#), the employer shall be contacted within 10 working days and notified of the missing elements. A reasonable amount of time for the employer to respond shall be specified during this contact.

1. If no response is received or if the information returned is still insufficient, a second attempt (by telephone or in writing) shall be made. The employer shall be informed that if it fails to respond in a timely or adequate manner, the PMA will not be granted and the employer may be found to not have abated.

2. If the employer responds satisfactorily by telephone and the Area Director determines that the requirements for a PMA have been met, that finding shall be documented in the case file.
3. Although OSHA policy is to handle PMAs as expeditiously as possible, there may be cases where the Area Director's decision on may be delayed because of deficiencies in the PMA, the need to conduct a monitoring inspection and/or a request for Regional Office or National Office involvement. Requests for additional time (e.g., 45 days) for the Area Director to reach a decision shall be sent to the Review Commission through the RSOL. A letter conveying this request shall be simultaneously sent to the employer and the employee representatives.

**C. Approval of PMA.**

After the expiration of 15 working days following the posting of a PMA, the Area Director shall agree with or objecting to the request within 10 working days, if additional time has not been requested from the Review Commission. In the absence of a timely objection, the PMA shall be deemed granted even if not explicitly approved. The following action shall be taken:

1. If the PMA requests an abatement date that is two years or less from the issuance date of the citation, the Area Director has the authority to approve or object to the petition.
2. Any PMA requesting an abatement date that is more than two years from the issuance date of the citation requires the approval of the Regional Administrator as well as the Area Director.
3. If the PMA is approved, the Area Director shall notify the employer and the employee representatives by letter.
4. The Area Director or Regional Administrator (as appropriate) after consultation with the RSOL, shall object to a PMA where the evidence supports non-approval (e.g., employer has taken no meaningful abatement action at all or has otherwise exhibited bad faith). In such cases, all relevant documentation shall be sent to the Review Commission in accordance with [§1903.14a\(d\)](#). Both the employer and the employee representatives shall be notified of this action by letter, with return receipt requested.
  - a. Letters notifying the employer or employee representative of the objection shall be mailed on the same date that the agency objection to the PMA is sent to the Review Commission.

- b. When appropriate, after consultation with the RSOL, a failure to abate notification may be issued in conjunction with the objection to the PMA.

**D. Objection to PMA.**

Affected employees or their representatives may file a written objection to an employer's PMA with the Area Director within 10 working days of the date of posting of the PMA by the employer or its service upon an authorized employee representative.

1. Failure to file such a written objection with the 10 working day period constitutes a waiver of any further right to object to the PMA.
2. If an employee or an employee representative objects to the extension of the abatement date, all relevant documentation shall be sent to the Review Commission.
  - a. Confirmation of this action shall be mailed (return receipt requested) to the objecting party as soon as it is accomplished.
  - b. Notification of the employee objection shall be mailed (return receipt requested) to the employer on the same day that the case file is forwarded to the Commission.

**IV. OSHA's Abatement Verification Regulation, §1903.19.**

**A. Important Terms and Concepts.**

1. **Abatement.**
  - a. Abatement means action by an employer to comply with a cited standard or regulation or to eliminate a recognized hazard identified by OSHA during an inspection.
  - b. For each inspection, except follow-up inspections, OSHA shall open an employer-specific case file. The case file remains open throughout the inspection process and is not closed until the Agency is satisfied that abatement has occurred. If abatement was not completed, annotate the circumstances or reasons in the case file and enter the proper code in the IMIS.
  - c. Employers are required to verify in writing that they have abated cited conditions, in accordance with [§1903.19](#).

2. **Abatement Verification.**

Abatement verification includes abatement certification, documents, plans, and progress reports.

3. **Abatement Certification.**

Employers must certify that abatement is complete for each cited violation. The written certification must include: the employer's name and address; the inspection number; the citation and item numbers; a statement that the information submitted is accurate; signature of the employer or employer's authorized representative; the date and method of abatement for each cited violation; and a statement that affected employees and their representatives have been informed of the abatement.

4. **Abatement Documents.**

Documentation submitted must establish that abatement has been completed, and include evidence such as the purchase or repair of equipment, photographic or video evidence of abatement or other written records verifying correction of the violative condition.

5. **Affected Employee.**

Affected employee means those employees who are exposed to the hazards(s) identified as violations(s) in a citation.

6. **Final Order Dates.**

a. **Uncontested Citation Item.**

For an uncontested citation item, the final order date is the day following the fifteenth working day after the employer's receipt of the citation.

b. **Contested Citation Item.**

For a contested citation item, the final order date is as follows:

- The thirtieth day after the date on which a decision or order of a Review Commission administrative law judge has been docketed with the Commission, unless a member of the Commission has directed review; or

- Where review has been directed, the thirtieth day after the date on which the Commission issues its decision or order disposing of all or pertinent part of a case; or
- The date on which a federal appeals court issues a decision affirming the violation in a case in which a final order of Review Commission has been stayed.

c. **Informal Settlement Dates.**

The final order date is when, within the 15 working days to contest a citation, the ISA is signed by **both** parties. See also [Chapter 15, Section XIII, Citation Final Order Dates](#).

7. **Abatement Dates.**

a. **Uncontested Citations.**

For uncontested citations, the abatement date is the later of the following dates:

- The abatement date identified in the citation;
- The extended date established as a result of an employer's filing for a Petition for Modification of Abatement (PMA) (see Review Commission Rule 37, [§2200.37](#)); or
- The date established by an informal settlement agreement.

b. **Contested Citations.**

For contested citations for which the Review Commission has issued a final order, the abatement date is the later of the following dates:

- The date identified in the final order for abatement;
- Where there has been a contest of a violation or abatement date (not penalty), the date computed by adding the period allowed in the citation for abatement to the final order date; or
- The date established by a formal settlement agreement.

c. **Contested Penalty Only.**

Where an employer has contested only the proposed penalty, the abatement period continues to run unaffected by the contest. The abatement period is subject to the time periods set forth above.

8. **Movable Equipment.**

- a. Movable equipment means a hand-held or non-hand-held machine or device, powered or non-powered, that is used to do work and is moved within or between worksites.
- b. Hand-held equipment is equipment that is hand-held when operated and can generally be picked up and operated with one or two hands, such as a hand grinder, skill saw, portable electric drill, nail gun, etc.

9. **Worksite.**

- a. For the purpose of enforcing the Abatement Verification regulation, the worksite is the physical location specified within the “Alleged Violation Description” of the citation.
- b. If no location is specified, the worksite shall be the inspection site where the cited violation occurred.

B. **Written Certification.**

The Abatement Verification Regulation, [§1903.19](#), requires those employers who have received a citation(s) for violation(s) of the Act to certify in writing that they have abated the hazardous condition for which they were cited and to inform affected employees of their abatement actions.

C. **Verification Procedures.**

The verification procedures to be followed by an employer depend on the nature of the violation(s) identified and the employer's abatement actions. The abatement verification regulation establishes requirements for the following:

1. Abatement Certification
2. Abatement Documentation
3. Abatement Plans

4. Progress Reports
5. Tagging for Movable Equipment

**D. Supplemental Procedures.**

Where necessary, OSHA supplements these procedures with follow-up inspections and onsite monitoring inspections. For additional information see [Section XII](#) of this chapter, *OnSite Visits: Procedures for Abatement Verification and Monitoring*.

**E. Requirements.**

Except for the application of warning tags or citations on movable equipment ([§1903.19\(i\)](#)), the abatement verification regulation does not impose any requirements on the employer until a citation item has become a final order of the Review Commission. For moveable hand-held equipment, the warning tag or citation must be attached immediately after the employer receives the citation. For other moveable equipment, the warning tag or citation must be attached prior to moving the equipment within or between worksites.

**V. Abatement Certification.**

**A. Minimum Level.**

Abatement certification is the minimum level of abatement verification and is required for all violations once they become Review Commission final orders. An exception exists where the CSHO observed abatement during the onsite portion of the inspection and the violation is listed on the citation as “Corrected During Inspection (CDI)” or “Quick-Fix.” See [Paragraph VI.D.](#) of this chapter, *CSHO Observed Abatement*.

**B. Certification Requirements.**

The employer's written certification that abatement is complete must include the following information for each cited violation:

1. The date and method of abatement and a statement that affected employees and their representatives have been informed of the abatement;
2. The employer's name and address;
3. The inspection number to which the submission relates;

4. The citation and item numbers to which the submission relates;
5. A statement that the information submitted is accurate; and
6. The signature of the employer or the employer's authorized representative.

A non-mandatory example of an abatement certification letter is available in [Appendix A](#) of the Abatement Verification Regulation ([§1903.19](#)).

**C. Certification Timeframe.**

1. All citation items which have become final orders, regardless of their characterizations, require written abatement certification within 10 calendar days of the abatement date.
2. A PMA received and processed in accordance with the guidance of the FOM will suspend the 10-day time period for receipt of the abatement certification for the item for which the PMA is requested.
  - a. Thus, no citation will be issued for failure to submit the certification within 10 days of the abatement date.
  - b. If the PMA is denied, the 10-day time period for submission to OSHA begins on the day the employer receives notice of the denial.

**VI. Abatement Documentation.**

More extensive documentation of abatement is required for the most serious violations. When a violation requires abatement documentation, in addition to certifying abatement, the employer must submit documents demonstrating that abatement is complete.

**A. Required Abatement Documentation.**

Pursuant to [§1903.19](#), documentation of abatement is required for the following:

1. Willful violations;
2. Repeat violations; and
3. Serious violations where OSHA determines that such documentation is necessary as indicated on the citation. For



further information see [Paragraph VI.C.](#) of this chapter, *Abatement Documentation for Serious Violations*.

**B. Adequacy of Abatement Documentation.**

1. Abatement documentation must be accurate and describe or portray the abated condition adequately. It may be submitted in electronic form, if approved by the Area Director.
2. The abatement regulation does not mandate a particular type of documentary evidence for any specific cited conditions.
3. The adequacy of the abatement documentation submitted by the employer will be assessed by OSHA using the information available in the citation and the Agency's knowledge of the employer's workplace and history.
4. Examples of documents that demonstrate that abatement is complete include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Photographic or video evidence of abatement;
  - b. Evidence of the purchase or repair of equipment;
  - c. Evidence of actions taken to abate;
  - d. Bills from repair services;
  - e. Reports or evaluations by safety and health professionals describing the abatement of the hazard or a report of analytical testing;
  - f. Documentation from the manufacturer that the article repaired is within the manufacturer's specifications;
  - g. Records of training completed by employees if the citation is related to inadequate employee training; and
  - h. A copy of program documents if the citation was related to a missing or inadequate program, such as a deficiency in the employer's respirator or hazard communication program.
5. Abatement documentation (photos, employer programs, etc.) shall be retained in accordance with [ADM 03-01-005](#), *OSHA Compliance Records*, dated August 3, 1998.

**C. Abatement Documentation for Serious Violations.**

**1. High Gravity Serious Violations.**

- a. OSHA policy is generally that all high gravity serious violations will require abatement documentation.
- b. Where, in the opinion of the Area Director, abatement documentation is not required for a high gravity serious violation, the reasons for this must be set forth in the case file.

**2. Moderate or Low Gravity Serious Violations.**

Moderate or low gravity serious violations should not normally require abatement documentation, except that the Area Director will require evidence of abatement for moderate and low gravity serious violations under the following circumstances:

- a. If the establishment has been issued a citation for a willful violation or a failure-to-abate notice for any standard which has become final order in the previous three years; or
- b. If the employer has any history of a violation that resulted in a fatality or an OSHA-300 log entry indicating serious physical harm to an employee in the past three years. The standard being cited must be similar to the standard cited in connection with the fatality or serious injury or illness.

**D. CSHO Observed Abatement.**

1. Employers are not required to certify abatement for violations which they promptly abate during the onsite portion of the inspection and observed by the CSHO.

- a. Area Directors may use their discretion in extending the “24 hour” time limit to document abated conditions during the inspection.
- b. Observed abatement will be documented on the Violations Summary Form (OSHA-1B and/or OSHA-1B(IH)), for each violation and must include the date and method of abatement.

2. If the observed abatement is for a violation that would normally require abatement documentation by the employer, the documentation in the case file must also indicate that abatement is complete. Where suitable, the CSHO may use photographs or video evidence. For additional information regarding adequacy of

abatement documentation, see [Paragraph VI.B.](#) of this chapter, *Adequacy of Abatement Documentation.*

3. When the abatement has been witnessed and documented by the CSHO, a notation reading “Corrected During Inspection” shall be made on the citation. Immediate abatement of some violations may qualify for penalty reductions under OSHA’s “Quick-Fix” incentive program. These incentives are discussed with the employer during the opening conference. See [Chapter 6, Paragraph IV.A.](#), *Quick-Fix Penalty Adjustment.*
4. Notations stating “Corrected during inspection” or “Employer has abated all hazards” shall not be made on the citation in cases where there is evidence of a continuing violative practice by an employer that may be subject to a summary enforcement order under [Section 11\(b\)](#) of the Act (i.e., failure to provide fall protection is a recurring condition based on citation history or other indications suggesting widespread violations of the same or similar standards at other establishments or construction worksites).

## **VII. Monitoring Information for Abatement Periods Greater than 90 Days.**

### **A. Abatement Periods Greater than 90 Days.**

For abatement periods greater than 90 calendar days, the regulation allows the Area Director flexibility in either requiring or not requiring monitoring information.

1. The requirement for abatement plans and progress reports must be specifically associated to the citation item to which they relate.
2. Progress reports may not be required unless abatement plans are specifically required.
3. Note that Paragraphs (e) and (f) of [§1903.19](#) have limits: the Area Director is not allowed to require an abatement plan for abatement periods less than 91 days or for citations characterized as other-than-serious.
4. The regulation places an obligation on employers, where necessary, to identify how employees are to be protected from exposure to the violative condition during the abatement period. One way of ensuring that interim protection is included in the abatement plan is to note this requirement on the citation. See [§1903.19, Non-Mandatory Appendix B](#), for a sample of an Abatement Plan and Progress Report.

**B. Abatement Plans.**

1. The Area Director may require an employer to submit an abatement plan for each qualifying cited violation.
  - a. The requirement for an abatement plan must be indicated in the citation.
  - b. The citation may also call for the abatement plan to include interim measures.
2. Within 25 calendar days from the final order date, the employer must submit an abatement plan for each violation that identifies the violation and the steps to be taken to achieve abatement. The abatement plan must include a schedule for completing the abatement and, where necessary, the methods for protecting employees from exposure to the hazardous conditions in the interim until the abatement is complete ([§1903.19\(e\)\(2\)](#)).
3. In cases where the employer can not prepare an abatement plan within the allotted time, a PMA must be submitted by the employer to amend the abatement date.

**C. Progress Reports.**

1. An employer that is required to submit an abatement plan may also be required to submit periodic progress reports for each cited violation. In such cases, the citation must indicate:
  - a. That periodic progress reports are required and the citation items for which they are required;
  - b. The date on which an initial progress report must be submitted, which may be no sooner than 30 calendar days after the due date of an abatement plan;
  - c. Whether additional progress reports are required; and
  - d. The date(s) on which additional progress reports must be submitted.
2. For each violation, the progress report must identify in a single sentence if possible, the action taken to achieve abatement and the date the action was taken. There is nothing in this policy or the

regulation prohibiting progress reports as a result of settlement agreements.

**D. Special Requirements for Long-Term Abatement.**

1. Long-term abatement is abatement which will be completed more than one year from the citation issuance date.
2. The Area Director must require the employer to submit an abatement plan for every violation with an abatement date in excess of one year.
3. Progress reports are mandatory and must be required at a minimum every six months. More frequent reporting may be required at the discretion of the area director.

**VIII. Employer Failure to Submit Required Abatement Certification.**

**A. Actions Preceding Citation for Failure to Certify Abatement.**

1. If abatement certification, or any required documentation, is not received within 13 calendar days after the abatement date (the regulation requires filing within 10 calendar days after the abatement date; and another 3 calendar days is added for mailing), the following procedures should be followed:
  - a. Remind the employer by telephone of the requirement to submit the material and tell the employer that a citation will be issued if the required documents are not received within 7 calendar days after the telephone call.
  - b. During the conversation with the employer, determine why it has not complied and document all communication efforts in the case file. Discuss OSHA's PMA policy and explain that a late petition to modify the abatement date can be accepted only if accompanied by the employer's statement of exceptional circumstances explaining the delay.
  - c. Issue a follow-up letter to the employer the same day as the telephone call.
  - d. The employer may be allowed to respond via fax or email where appropriate.

2. If the certification and/or documentation are not received within the next 7 calendar days, a single other-than-serious citation will be issued.
3. Normally citations for failure to submit abatement certification for violations of [§1903.19\(c\)](#) shall not be issued until the above procedures have been followed and the employer has been provided additional opportunity to comply. These pre-citation procedures also apply when abatement plans or progress reports are not received within 13 days of the due date.

**B. Citation for Failure to Certify.**

1. Citations for failure to submit abatement verification (certification, documentation, abatement plans or progress reports) can be issued without formal follow-up activities by following the procedures identified below.
2. A single other-than-serious citation will be issued combining all the individual instances where the employer has not submitted abatement certification and/or abatement documentation.
  - a. This “other” citation will be issued under the same inspection number which contained the original violations cited.
  - b. The abatement date for this citation shall be set 30 days from the date of issuance.

*NOTE: Each violation of [§1903.19\(c\)](#), [\(d\)](#), [\(e\)](#), or [\(f\)](#) with respect to each original citation item is a separate item.*

3. For those situations where the abatement date falls within the 15 day informal conference time period, and an informal conference request is likely, enforcement activities should be delayed for these citations until it is known if the citation's characterization or abatement period is to be modified.
4. For those rare instances where the reminder letter is returned to the Area Office by the Post Office as undeliverable and telephone contact efforts fail, the Area Director has the discretion to stop further efforts to locate the employer and document in the case file the reason for no abatement certification.

**C. Certification Omissions.**

1. An initial minor or non-substantive omission in an abatement certification (e.g., lack of a definitive statement stating that the

information being submitted is accurate) should be considered a de minimis condition of the regulation.

2. If there are minor deficiencies, such as omitting the inspection number, signature or date, the employer should be contacted by telephone to verify that the documents received were the ones they intended to submit. If so, the date stamp of the Area Office can serve as the date on the document.
3. A certification with an omitted signature should be returned to the employer to be signed.

**D. Penalty Assessment for Failure to Certify.**

The penalty provisions of [Sections 9](#) and [17](#) of the OSH Act apply to all citations issued under this regulation. See [Chapter 6, Penalties and Debt Collection](#), for additional information.

**IX. Tagging for Movable Equipment.**

**A. Tag-Related Citations.**

Tag-related citations must be observed by CSHOs prior to the issuance of a citation for failure to initially tag cited movable equipment.

1. See [§1903.19, Non-mandatory Appendix C](#), for a sample warning tag. OSHA must be able to prove the employer's initial failure to act (tag the movable equipment upon receipt of the citation).
2. Where there is insufficient evidence to support a violation of the employer's initial failure to tag or post the citation on the cited movable equipment, a citation may be issued for failure to maintain the tag or copy of the citation using [§1903.19\(i\)\(6\)](#).

**B. Equipment Which is Moved.**

Tags are intended to provide an interim form of protection to employees through notification for those who may not know of the citation or the hazardous condition.

1. For non hand-held equipment, CSHOs should make every effort to be as detailed as possible when documenting the initial location where the violation occurred. This documentation is critical to the enforcement of the tagging requirement ([§1903.19\(i\)](#)) because the tagging provision is triggered upon *movement* of the equipment.

2. For hand-held equipment, employers must attach a warning tag or copy of the citation *immediately* after the employer's receipt of the citation. The attachment of the tag is not dependent on any *subsequent* movement of the equipment.

**X. Failure to Notify Employees by Posting.**

**A. Evidence.**

Like tag-related citations, CSHOs shall investigate an employer's failure to notify employees by posting.

**B. Location of Posting.**

Where an employer claims that posting at the location where the violation occurred would ineffectively inform employees ([§1903.19\(g\)\(2\)](#)) the employer may post the document or a summary of the document in a location where it will be readily observable by affected employees and their representatives. Employers may also communicate by other means with affected employees and their representatives regarding abatement activities.

**C. Other Communication.**

The CSHO must determine not only whether the documents or summaries were appropriately posted, but also whether, as an alternative, other communication methods, such as meetings or employee publications, were used.

**XI. Abatement Verification for Special Enforcement Situations.**

**A. Construction Activity Considerations.**

1. Construction activities pose situations requiring special consideration.
  - a. Construction site closure or hazard removal due to completing of the structure or project will only be accepted as abatement without certification where the area office CSHO verifies the site closure/completion and where closure/completion effectively abates the condition cited.
  - b. In all other circumstances, the employer must certify to OSHA that the hazards have been abated by the submission of an abatement certification. In rare cases the verification may have to cease and the abatement action closed through cessation of



work or verification with the general contractor of the site to verify abatement.

2. Equipment-related and all program-related (e.g., crane inspection, hazard communication, respirator, training, competent person, qualified persons, etc.) violations *will always* require employer certification of abatement regardless of construction site closure.
3. Where the violation specified in a citation is the employer's general practice of failing to comply with a requirement (e.g., the employer routinely fails to provide fall protection at its worksites), closure/completion of the individual worksite will not be accepted as abatement.
4. For situations where the main office of the employer being cited is physically located in another Regional jurisdiction, the Area Director having the jurisdiction over the work site will proceed as if the employer's main office were in the Area Director's own jurisdiction, and notify the affected Regional Office of the communication with the employer.
5. Where a follow-up inspection to verify abatement is deemed necessary, the affected Regions and Area Offices will determine the most efficient and mutually beneficial approach to conducting the inspection.

**B. Field Sanitation and Temporary Labor Camps.**

Under [Secretary's Order 3-2000](#), the authority to conduct inspections and issue citations for field sanitation and most temporary labor camps in agricultural employment has been delegated to the Employment Standards Administration (ESA).

1. An employer's obligation under the abatement verification regulation still applies. However, OSHA's delegation of authority to ESA does not extend to other OSHA regulations or standards, including [§1903.19](#).
2. In situations where ESA determines employers are in violation of [§1903.19](#), the following procedures are to be followed:
  - a. Wage and Hour District Directors, after following the procedures outlined in [Section VIII](#) of this chapter, *Employer Failure to Submit Required Abatement Certification*, will send a copy of the inspection case file or a summary memorandum

to the OSHA Regional Administrator's Office for referral following established practice.

- b. The OSHA Regional Office shall forward appropriate case files to the Area Office having jurisdiction to open a NEW inspection (coded as a Referral) and process citation(s) for failure to comply with [§1903.19](#). Upon receipt of the abatement verification documents related to the ESA inspection, OSHA will fax them to ESA.

*NOTE: All field sanitation and temporary labor camp cases will automatically comply with the Appropriations Act rider because the field sanitation standard does not apply to employers with 10 or fewer employees and the rider does not apply to temporary labor camps.*

- c. Penalties will be collected and processed following normal procedures. Upon receipt of penalties for the OSHA-issued [§1903.19](#) citations, OSHA's case file will be closed.
- d. In situations where an employer does not respond to OSHA's issuance of violations of [§1903.19](#) and dunning efforts fail, ESA shall be informed through memorandum and the OSHA case file closed with the penalties referred for debt collection.

*NOTE: See also to [Chapter 10](#), Industry Sectors, and [Chapter 12](#), Specialized Inspection Procedures, for additional information.*

**C. Follow-Up Policy for Employer Failure to Verify Abatement under §1903.19.**

Follow-up or monitoring inspections would not normally be conducted when evidence of abatement is provided by the employer or employee representatives. For further information on exceptions for Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) cases, see [CPL 02-00-145](#), *Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) Directive*, dated January 1, 2008.

*NOTE: For further information on extended abatement periods, see [Section VII](#), Monitoring Information for Abatement Periods Greater than 90 Days, and [Section XIII](#), Monitoring Inspections, both of this chapter.*

1. Where the employer has not submitted the required abatement certification or documentation within the time permitted by the regulation, the Area Director has discretion to conduct a follow-up inspection.

2. Submission of inadequate documents may also be the basis for a follow-up inspection.
3. This inspection should not generally occur before the end of the original 15 day contest period except in unusual circumstances.

## **XII. OnSite Visits: Procedures for Abatement Verification and Monitoring.**

### **A. Follow-Up Inspections.**

The primary purpose of a follow-up inspection is to determine if the previously cited violations have been corrected.

### **B. Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) Follow-Up.**

1. For any inspection opened after October 1, 2003, which results in an EEP case, an enhanced follow-up inspection will normally be conducted even if abatement of the cited violations has been verified. The primary purpose of follow-up inspections is to assess both whether the cited violation(s) were abated and whether the employer is committing similar violations.
2. If there is a compelling reason not to conduct a follow-up inspection, the reason must be documented in the file. The Region shall also report these cases to the Director of Enforcement Programs, along with the reason why a follow-up was not initiated.
3. Grouped and combined violations from the original inspection will be counted as one violation for EEP purposes.
4. For further information on exceptions for Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) cases, see [CPL 02-00-145](#), *Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) Directive*, dated January 1, 2008, for more information on the Enhanced Enforcement Program.

### **C. Initial Follow-Up.**

1. The initial follow-up is the first follow-up inspection after issuance of the citation.
2. If a violation is found not to have been abated, the CSHO shall inform the employer that the employer is subject to a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation and proposed additional daily penalties while such failure or violation continues.

3. Failure to comply with enforceable interim abatement dates involving multi-step abatement shall be subject to a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation.
4. Where the employer has implemented some controls, but the control measures were inadequate during follow-up monitoring, and other technology was available which would have brought the process into compliance, a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation normally shall be issued. If the employer has exhibited good faith, a late PMA for extenuating circumstances may be considered.
5. Where an apparent failure to abate by means of engineering controls is found to be due to technical infeasibility, no failure to abate notice shall be issued; however, if proper administrative controls, work practices or personal protective equipment are not utilized, a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation shall be issued.

**D. Second Follow-Up.**

1. Any subsequent follow-up after the initial follow-up inspection dealing with the same violations is considered a second follow-up.
  - a. After the Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation has been issued, the Area Director shall allow a reasonable time for abatement of the violation before conducting a second follow-up. The employer must ensure that employees are adequately protected by other means until the violations are corrected.
  - b. If the employer contests the proposed additional daily penalties, a follow-up inspection shall still be scheduled to ensure correction of the original violation.
2. If a second follow-up inspection reveals the employer still has not corrected the original violations, a second Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation with additional daily penalties shall be issued if the Area Director, after consultation with the Regional Administrator and RSOL, believes it to be appropriate.
3. If a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation and additional daily penalties are not to be proposed because of an employer's flagrant disregard of a citation or an item on a citation, the Area Director shall immediately contact the Regional Administrator, in writing, detailing the circumstances so the matter

can be referred to the RSOL for action, as appropriate, in the U.S. Court of Appeals in accordance with [Section 11\(b\)](#) of the Act.

E. **OSH Act Section 11(b).**

There may be times during the initial follow-up when, because of an employer's flagrant disregard of a citation or other factors, it will be apparent that traditional enforcement actions would be inappropriate or ineffective. In such cases, a summary enforcement action shall be initiated under [Section 11\(b\)](#) of the Act in the U.S. Court of Appeals. The Area Director shall notify the Regional Administrator, in writing, of all the particular circumstances of the case for referral to the RSOL.

F. **Follow-Up Inspection Reports.**

1. Follow-up inspection reports shall be included with the original initial inspection case file. The applicable identification and description sections of the OSHA-1B/1B(IH) Form shall be used for documenting correction of willful, repeated, and serious violations and failure to correct items during follow-up inspections.
2. If Serious, Willful, or Repeat violation items were appropriately grouped in the OSHA-1B/1B(IH) in the original case file, they may be grouped on the follow-up OSHA-1B; otherwise, individual OSHA-1B/1B(IH) forms shall be used for each item. The correction of other-than-serious violations may be documented in the narrative portion of the case file.
3. **Documentation of Hazard Abatement by Employer.**
  - a. The hazard abatement observed by the CSHO shall be specifically described in the OSHA-1B/1B(IH) form, including any applicable dimensions, materials, specifications, personal protective equipment, engineering controls, measurements or readings, or other conditions.
  - b. Brief terms such as "corrected" or "in compliance" will not be accepted as proper documentation for violations having been corrected.
  - c. When appropriate, this written description shall be supplemented by a photograph and/or a videotape to illustrate correction circumstances.
  - d. Only the item description and identification blocks need be completed on the follow-up OSHA-1B/1B(IH) with an

occasional inclusion of an applicable employer statement concerning correction under the employer knowledge section, if appropriate.

4. **Sampling.**

- a. CSHOs conducting a follow-up inspection to determine abatement of violations of air contaminant or noise standards, shall decide whether sampling is necessary and if so, what kind (i.e., spot sampling, short-term sampling, or full-shift sampling).
- b. If there is reasonable probability that a Notification of Failure to Abate Alleged Violation will be issued, full-shift sampling is required to verify exposure limits based on an 8-hour time-weighted average.

5. **Narrative.**

The CSHO must include in the narrative the findings pursuant to the inspection, along with recommendations for action. In order to make a valid recommendation, it is important to have all the pertinent factors available in an organized manner.

6. **Failure to Abate.**

In the event that any item has not been abated, complete documentation shall be included on an OSHA-1B.

**XIII. Monitoring Inspections.**

A. **General.**

Monitoring inspections are conducted to ensure that hazards are being corrected and employees are being protected, whenever a long period of time is needed for an establishment to come into compliance. Such inspections may be scheduled, among other reasons, as a result of:

- ▶ Abatement dates in excess of one year.
- ▶ A petition for modification of abatement date (PMA).
- ▶ A Corporate Wide Settlement Agreement. See [CPL 02-00-090, Guidelines for Administration of Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreements](#), dated June 3, 1991.
- ▶ To ensure that terms of a permanent variance are being carried out.

- ▶ At the request of an employer requesting technical assistance granted by the Area director.

**B. Conduct of Monitoring Inspection (PMAs and Long-Term Abatement).**

Monitoring inspections shall be conducted in the same manner as follow-up inspections. An inspection shall be classified as a monitoring inspection when a safety/health inspection is conducted for one or more of the following purposes:

- ▶ Determine the progress an employer is making toward final correction.
- ▶ Ensure that the target dates of a multi-step abatement plan are being met.
- ▶ Ensure that an employer's petition for the modification of abatement dates is made in good faith and that the employer has attempted to implement necessary controls as expeditiously as possible.
- ▶ Ensure that the employees are being properly protected until final controls are implemented.
- ▶ Ensure that the terms of a permanent variance are being carried out.
- ▶ Provide abatement assistance for items under citation.

**C. Abatement Dates in Excess of One Year.**

1. Monitoring visits shall be scheduled to check on progress made whenever abatement dates extend beyond one year from the issuance date of the citation.
2. These inspections shall be conducted approximately every six months, counted from the citation date, until final abatement has been achieved for all cited violations.
  - a. If the case has been contested, the final order date shall be used as a starting point, instead of the citation date.
  - b. A settlement agreement may specify an alternative monitoring schedule.
3. If the employer is submitting satisfactory quarterly progress reports and the Area Director agrees after careful review, that these reports

reflect adequate progress on implementation of control measures and adequate interim protection for employees, a monitoring inspection may be conducted every twelve months.

4. Such inspections shall have priority equal to that of serious formal complaints. The seriousness of the hazards requiring abatement shall determine the priority among monitoring inspections.

**D. Monitoring Abatement Efforts.**

1. The Area Director shall take the steps necessary to ensure that the employer is making a good faith attempt to bring about abatement as expeditiously as possible.
2. Where engineering controls have been cited or required for abatement, a monitoring inspection shall be scheduled to evaluate the employer's abatement efforts. Failure to conduct a monitoring inspection shall be fully explained in the case file.
3. Where no engineering controls have been cited but more time is needed for other reasons not requiring assistance from OSHA, such as delays in receiving equipment, a monitoring visit need not normally be scheduled.
4. Monitoring inspections shall be scheduled as soon as possible after the initial contact with the employer and shall not be delayed until actual receipt of the PMA.
5. CSHOs shall decide during the monitoring inspection whether sampling is necessary and, if so, to what extent; i.e., spot sampling, short-term sampling, or full-shift sampling.
6. CSHOs shall include pertinent findings in the narrative along with recommendations for action. To reach a valid conclusion when recommending action, it is important to have all the relevant factors available in an organized manner. The factors to be considered may include, but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Progress reports or other indications of the employer's good faith, demonstrating effective use of technical expertise and/or management skills, accuracy of information reported by the employer, and timeliness of progress reports.
  - b. The employer's assessment of the hazards by means of surveys performed by in-house personnel, consultants, and/or the employer's insurance agency.



- c. Other documentation collected by Area Office personnel including verification of progress reports, success and/or failure of abatement efforts, and assessment of current exposure levels of employees.
- d. Employer and employee interviews.
- e. Specific reasons for requesting additional time including specific plans for controlling exposure and specific calendar dates.
- f. Personal protective equipment.
- g. Medical programs.
- h. Emergency action plans.

**E. Monitoring Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreements.**

Corporate-wide Settlement Agreements (CSA) extend abatement requirements to all covered locations of the company. These agreements may require baseline, periodic and follow-up monitoring. Additional information regarding abatement related to CSA may be found in [CPL 02-00-090](#), *Guidelines for Administrating of Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreements*, dated June 3, 1991.

**XIV. Notification of Failure to Abatement.**

**A. Violation.**

A Notification of Failure to Abate an Alleged Violation (OSHA-2B) shall be issued in cases where violations have not been corrected as required, as verified by an onsite inspection or follow-up inspection.

**B. Penalties.**

Failure to abate penalties shall be applied when an employer has not corrected a previously cited violation which had become a final order of the Commission.

**C. Calculation of Additional Penalties.**

- 1. A Gravity Based Penalty (GBP) for unabated violations is to be calculated for failure to abate a serious or other-than-serious violation on the basis of the facts noted upon re-inspection.

2. Detailed information on calculating failure to abate (FTA) penalties is included in [Chapter 6, Penalties and Debt Collection](#).

## **XV. Case File Management.**

### **A. Closing of Case File Without Abatement Certification.**

The closing of a case file without abatement certification(s) must be justified through a statement in the case file by the Area Director or his/her designee, addressing the reason for accepting each uncertified violation as an abated citation.

### **B. Review of Employer-Submitted Abatement.**

Area Offices are encouraged to review employer-submitted abatement verification materials as soon as possible but no later than 30 days after receipt. If the review will be delayed, notify the employer that the material will be reviewed by a certain date, and that the case will be closed if appropriate, after that time.

### **C. Whether to Keep Abatement Documentation.**

Abatement documentation (photos, employer programs, etc.) shall be retained in accordance with OSHA Instruction [ADM 03-01-005](#), *OSHA Compliance Records*, dated August 3, 1998.

## **XVI. Abatement Services Available to Employers.**

Employers requesting abatement assistance shall be informed that OSHA is willing to work with them even after citations have been issued and provides incentives for immediate onsite abatement of certain types of violations. For further information see [Chapter 6, Section IV](#), *Effect on Penalties if Employer Immediately Corrects*.

## Chapter 8

### SETTLEMENTS

#### I. Settlement of Cases by Area Directors.

Area Directors are granted settlement authority and shall follow these instructions when negotiating settlement agreements.

##### A. General.

1. Except for egregious cases, or cases that affect other jurisdictions, Area Directors may enter into Informal Settlement Agreements with employers prior to the employer filing a written notice of contest.

*NOTE: After the employer has filed a written notice of contest, the Area Director may proceed toward a Formal Settlement Agreement with the concurrence and participation of the RSOL.*

2. Area Directors may amend abatement dates, reclassify violations (e.g., willful to serious, serious to other-than-serious), and modify or withdraw a penalty, a citation, or a citation item, where evidence establishes during the informal conference that the changes are justified.
3. Area Directors may actively negotiate the amount of proposed penalties, depending on the circumstances of the case and the particular improvements in employee safety and health that can be obtained.
4. Employers shall be informed that they are required by [§1903.19](#) to post copies of all amendments or changes to citations resulting from informal conferences. Employee representatives must also be provided with copies of any agreements.
5. Cases or issues relating to potential [Section 17](#) settlements shall be handled in accordance with established agency procedures, including approval by the National Office.

##### B. Pre-Contest Settlement (Informal Settlement Agreement).

Pre-contest settlement discussions will generally occur during or immediately following the information conference and prior to the expiration of the 15 working day contest period.

1. In the event that an employer is bringing an attorney to an informal conference, Area Directors or their designees are encouraged to contact the RSOL and ask for the assistance of counsel.
2. If a settlement is reached during the informal conference, an Informal Settlement Agreement (ISA) shall be prepared and the employer will be asked to sign it. It will be effective upon signature of both the employer and the Area Director (**who shall sign last**), provided the contest period has not expired. Both parties will date the documents on the day of actual signature.
3. If the employer is not present to sign the ISA, the Area Director shall send the agreement to the employer for signature. After signing, the employer must return the agreement to the Area Director by hand delivery or via facsimile within the 15 day contest period.
  - a. In every case, Area Directors shall give employers notice in writing that the citation will become final and unreviewable at the end of the contest period, unless the employer signs the proposed agreement or files a written notice of contest.
  - b. If an employer wishes to make any changes to the text of the agreement, the Area Director must agree to and authorize the proposed changes prior to the expiration of the contest period.
    - If the changes proposed by the employer are acceptable to the Area Director, the exact language written into the agreement shall be mutually agreed upon. Employers shall be instructed to incorporate the agreed-upon language into the agreement, sign it, and return to the Area Office by hand delivery or via facsimile.
    - Annotations incorporating the exact language of any changes authorized shall be made to the retained copy of the agreement and signed and dated by the Area Director.
  - c. Upon receipt of the ISA signed by the employer, the Area Director will ensure, prior to his/her signature, that any modifications to the agreement are consistent with the notations made in the case file.
    - In these cases, the citation record will then be updated in IMIS in accordance with current procedures.

- If an employer's changes substantially alter the original terms, the agreement signed by the employer will be treated as a notice of contest and handled accordingly. The employer will be informed of this as soon as possible.
- d. A reasonable time will be allowed for return of the agreement from the employer.
- If an agreement is not received within the 15 day contest period, the Area Director will presume the employer did not sign the agreement, and the citation will be treated as a final order.
  - The employer will be required to certify that the informal settlement agreement was signed prior to the expiration of the contest period.
4. If settlement efforts are unsuccessful and the employer contests the citation, the Area Director will state the terms of the final settlement offer in the case file.

**C. Procedures for Preparing the Informal Settlement Agreement.**

The ISA shall be prepared and processed in accordance with current OSHA policies and practices. For guidance in determining final dates of settlement and Review Commission orders, see [Chapter 15, Section XIII, Citation Final Order Dates](#).

**D. Post-Contest Settlement (Formal Settlement Agreement).**

Post-contest settlements will normally occur before the complaint is filed with the Review Commission.

1. Following the filing of a notice of contest, the Area Director shall (unless other procedures have been agreed upon) notify the RSOL when it appears that negotiations with the employer may produce a settlement. This notification shall occur at the time the notice of contest transmittal memorandum is sent to the RSOL.
2. If a settlement is later requested by the employer, the Area Director will communicate the proposed terms to the RSOL, who will then draft and execute the agreement.

E. **Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreement.**

Corporate-wide Settlement Agreements (CSAs) may be entered into under special circumstances to obtain formal recognition by the employer of cited hazards and formal acceptance of the obligation to seek out and abate those hazards throughout all workplaces under its control. See [CPL 02-00-090](#), *Guidelines for Administration of Corporate-Wide Settlement Agreements*, dated June 3, 1991, for additional information.

## Chapter 9

### COMPLAINT AND REFERRAL PROCESSING

#### I. Safety and Health Complaints and Referrals.

##### A. Definitions.

###### 1. Complaint.

Notice of an alleged safety or health hazard (over which OSHA has jurisdiction), or a violation of the Act, submitted by a current employee or representative of employees.

###### 2. Formal Complaint.

Complaint made by a current employee or a representative of employees that meets all of the following requirements:

- a. Asserts that an imminent danger, a violation of the Act, or a violation of an OSHA standard exposes employees to a potential physical or health harm in the workplace;
- b. Is reduced to writing or submitted on an OSHA-7 form; and
- c. Is signed by at least one current employee or employee representative.

###### 3. Non-formal Complaint.

Any complaint alleging safety or health violations that does not meet all of the requirements of a formal complaint identified above and does not come from one of the sources identified under the definition of Referral, below.

###### 4. Inspection.

An onsite examination of an employer's worksite conducted by an OSHA compliance officer, initiated as the result of a complaint or referral, and meeting at least one of the criteria identified in the section on Criteria Warranting an Inspection, below.

###### 5. Inquiry.

A process conducted in response to a complaint or a referral that does not meet one of the identified inspection criteria. It does not

involve an onsite inspection of the workplace, but rather the employer is notified of the alleged hazard(s) or violation(s) by telephone, fax, email, or by letter if necessary. The employer is then requested to provide a response, and OSHA will notify the complainant of that response via appropriate means.

6. **Electronic Complaint.**

A complaint submitted via OSHA's public website. All complaints submitted via OSHA's public website are considered non-formal.

7. **Permanently Disabling Injury or Illness.**

An injury or illness that has resulted in permanent disability or an illness that is chronic or irreversible. Permanently disabling injuries or illnesses include, but are not limited to amputation, blindness, a standard threshold shift in hearing, lead or mercury poisoning, paralysis or third-degree burns.

8. **Referral.**

An allegation of a potential workplace hazard or violation received from one of the sources listed below.

- a. **CSHO referral** – information based on the direct observation of a CSHO. (On the OSHA-90, code 14A – A. *CSHO (Within Office).*)
- b. **Safety and health agency referral** – from sources including, but not limited to: NIOSH, state programs, consultation, and state or local health departments, as well as safety and/or health professionals in other Federal agencies. (As appropriate, code 14A – B. *Federal OSHA; C. State OSH; F. Consultation; G. State/Local Government; or I. Other.*)
- c. **11(c) complaint referral** – made by a whistleblower investigator when an employee alleges that he or she was retaliated against for complaining about safety or health conditions in the workplace, refusing to do an allegedly imminently dangerous task, or engaging in other activities related to occupational safety or health (Code 14A – D. *Discrimination.*)
- d. **Other government agency referral** – made by other Federal, State, or local government agencies or their employees, including local police and fire departments. (As appropriate,



code 14A – E. *Other Federal Agency, or G. State/Local Government.*)

- e. **Media report** – either news items reported in the media or information reported directly to OSHA by a media source. (Code 14A – H. *Media.*)
- f. **Employer report** - of accidents other than fatalities and catastrophes. (Code 14A – I. *Other.*)

9. **Representative of Employees.**

Any of the following:

- a. An authorized representative of the employee bargaining unit, such as a certified or recognized labor organization.
- b. An attorney acting for an employee.
- c. Any other person acting in a bona fide representative capacity, including, but not limited to, members of the clergy, social workers, spouses and other family members, and government officials or nonprofit groups and organizations acting upon specific complaints and injuries from individuals who are employees.

*NOTE: The representative capacity of the person filing complaints on behalf of another should be ascertained unless it is already clear. In general, the affected employee should have requested, or at least approved, the filing of the complaint on his or her behalf.*

B. **Classifying as a Complaint or a Referral.**

Whether the information received is classified as a complaint or a referral, an inspection of a workplace is normally warranted if **at least one** of the conditions in the section *Criteria Warranting an Inspection* is met.

C. **Criteria Warranting an Inspection.**

An inspection is normally warranted if **at least one** of the conditions below is met (but see also [Paragraph I.D.](#) of this chapter, *Scheduling an Inspection of an Employer in an Exempt Industry*):

- 1. A valid formal complaint is submitted. Specifically, the complaint must be reduced to writing or submitted on an OSHA-7 form, be signed by a current employee or representative of employees, and

state the reason for the inspection request with reasonable particularity. Additionally, there must be reasonable grounds to believe either that a violation of the Act or OSHA standard that exposes employees to physical harm exists, or that an imminent danger of death or serious injury exists, as provided in [Section 8\(f\)\(1\)](#) of the Act.

2. The information alleges that a permanently disabling injury or illness has occurred as a result of the complained of hazard(s), and there is reason to believe that the hazard or related hazards still exist.
3. The information alleges that an imminent danger situation exists.
4. The information concerns an establishment and an alleged hazard covered by a local, regional, or national emphasis program, the Site-Specific Targeting Plan.
5. The employer fails to provide an adequate response to an inquiry, or the individual who provided the original information provides further evidence that the employer's response is false or does not adequately address the hazard(s).
6. The establishment that is the subject of the information has a history of egregious, willful, failure-to-abate, or repeated citations within the Area Office's jurisdiction during the past three years, or is an establishment or related establishment in the Enhanced Enforcement Program. However, if the employer has previously submitted adequate documentation for these violations demonstrating that they were corrected and that programs have been implemented to prevent a recurrence of hazards, the Area Director will normally determine that an inspection is not necessary.
7. A whistleblower investigator or Regional Supervisory Investigator requests that an inspection be conducted in response to an employee's allegation that the employee was discriminated against for complaining about safety or health conditions in the workplace, refusing to perform an allegedly dangerous job or task, or engaging in other activities related to occupational safety or health.
8. If an inspection is scheduled or has begun at an establishment and a complaint or referral that would normally be handled via inquiry is received, that complaint or referral may, at the Area Director's discretion, be incorporated into the scheduled or ongoing

inspection. If such a complaint is formal, the complainant must receive a written response addressing the complaint items.

9. If the information gives reasonable grounds to believe that an employee under 18 years of age is exposed to a serious violation of a safety or health standard or a serious hazard, an onsite inspection will be initiated if the information relates to construction, manufacturing, agriculture, or other industries as determined by the Area Director. Limitations placed on OSHA's activities in agriculture by Appropriations Act provisions will be observed. See [CPL 02-00-051](#), *Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act*, dated May 28, 1998. A referral to Wage and Hour should also be initiated.

*NOTE: The information does not need to allege that a child labor law has been violated.*

10. The information received is a signed, written complaint from a current employee or employee representative that alleges a recordkeeping deficiency that indicates the existence of a serious safety or health violation.

**D. Scheduling an Inspection of an Employer in an Exempt Industry.**

In order to schedule an inspection of an employer in an exempt industry classification as specified by Appropriations Act provisions:

*NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-051](#), Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act, dated May 28, 1998.*

1. The information must come directly from a current employee; OR
2. It must be determined and documented in the case file that the information came from a representative of the employee (see [Paragraph I.A.9.](#) of this chapter, *Representative of Employees*), with the employee's knowledge of the representative's intended action.

**E. Electronic Complaints Received via the OSHA Public Website.**

1. Electronic complaints submitted via the OSHA public website are automatically forwarded via email to a designated Area Office in the appropriate state. That Office then forwards the electronic complaints to the appropriate Area Office in the state.
2. Each Area Office manages a "Complaints" mailbox and processes electronic complaints according to internal complaint processing

procedures. The complaints mailbox is monitored daily and every incoming complaint is reviewed for jurisdiction.

- a. If the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of the Area Office, the complaint is entered into IMIS and processed as usual.
  - b. If the complaint falls within the jurisdiction of another Area Office, the complaint is forwarded appropriately.
3. Area Offices will coordinate with State Plan States to establish procedures to process electronic complaints. The State establishes its own internal procedures for responding to such complaints. These procedures may be the State's usual procedures for handling unsigned complaints or they may include some further coordination with the complainant prior to action. In State Plan states, the Federal Monitoring office will screen the complaints unless there is another arrangement. If the complaint falls within the individual State Plan's jurisdiction, the Screening Office will follow the procedures developed with the State Plan for processing the complaint.
  4. Complete an OSHA-7 form for all complaint information received. In order to facilitate the tracking of electronic complaints, enter the following code in the Optional Information field:

**N-11-LOGXXXXXX**

- Where N-11 indicates that the complaint was filed electronically; and
  - The digits following LOG are the unique complaint ID/log numbers assigned to the electronic complaint when processed by the Salt Lake Technical Center. The log number may vary and does not have to be exactly six digits. In entering the code, there is no space between the word LOG and the digits that follow.
5. Information received electronically from a current employee is considered a non-formal complaint until that individual provides a signed copy of the information. The employee can send or fax a signed copy of the information, request that an OSHA-7 form be sent, or sign the information in person at the Area Office. Normally a complainant has five working days to formalize an electronic complaint. The Area Office must actively follow up on information received electronically in order to provide the employee with the opportunity to formalize the complaint.

6. All complaint-related material received electronically should be printed and date stamped with the date the material was submitted and received. When these dates are not the same, the Area Director will determine the appropriate date for the incoming material.

F. **Information Received by Telephone.**

1. While speaking with the caller, OSHA personnel will attempt to obtain the following information:
  - a. Whether the caller is a current employee or an employee representative.
  - b. The exact nature of the alleged hazard(s) and the basis of the caller's knowledge. The individual receiving the information must determine, to the extent possible, whether the information received describes an apparent violation of OSHA standards or the OSH Act.
  - c. The employer's name, address, email address, telephone and fax numbers, as well as the name of a contact person at the worksite.
  - d. The name, address, telephone number, and email address of any union and/or employee representative at the worksite.
2. As appropriate, OSHA will provide the caller with the following information:
  - a. Describe the complaint process, and if appropriate, the concepts of "inquiry" and "inspection," as well as the relative advantages of each.
  - b. If the caller is a current employee or a representative of employees, explain the distinction between a formal complaint and a non-formal complaint, and the rights and protections that accompany filing a formal complaint. These rights and protections include:
    - The right to request an onsite inspection.
    - Notification in writing if an inspection is deemed unnecessary because there are no reasonable grounds to believe that a violation or danger exists.

- The right to obtain review of a decision not to inspect by submitting a request for review in writing.
3. Information received by telephone from a current employee is considered a non-formal complaint until that individual provides a signed copy of the information. The employee can send or fax a signed copy of the information, request that an OSHA-7 form be sent, or sign the information in person at the Area Office. Normally a complainant has five working days to formalize an electronic complaint.
  4. If appropriate, inform the complainant of rights to confidentiality in accordance with [Section 8\(f\)\(1\)](#) of the Act for private sector employees, and [Executive Order 12196](#), dated February 26, 1980, for Federal employees, and ask whether the complainant wishes to exercise this right. When confidentiality is requested, the identity of the complainant is protected regardless of the formality of the complaint.
  5. Explain [Section 11\(c\)](#) rights to private sector employees and employees of the U.S. Postal Service, or reprisal and discrimination protection provided by [Executive Order 12196](#), [§1960.46](#) and the Whistleblowers Protection Act of 1989 to Federal employees. See [FAP 01-00-003](#), *Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs*, dated May 17, 1996, for reports of reprisal or discrimination from Federal employees.

**G. Procedures for Handling Complaints Filed in Multiple Area Offices or Regions.**

1. When a Regional Office determines that multiple offices within the Region have received the same complaint or, if the Regional Office suspects the same complaint has been filed in multiple Regions, the Regional Office should contact the Director or Deputy Director of the Directorate of Enforcement Programs (DEP).
2. DEP will query all 10 Regions and coordinate with the Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs to query the State Plan States in order to determine whether similar complaints were filed in multiple offices.
  - a. If multiple Regions have received the same complaint, the National Office will address the complaint with the employer.

- b. Area Offices should indicate in IMIS that these complaints have been transferred to the National Office. On the OSHA-7, in field 45a., select *A. Federal OSHA*; in field 45b., select *00 – National Office*. The complaint should then be closed using field 48.

#### H. **Procedures for an Inspection.**

1. Upon receipt of a complaint or referral, the Area Director (or his or her designee) will evaluate all available information to determine whether there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation or hazard exists.
  - a. If necessary, reasonable attempts will be made to contact the individual who provided the information in order to obtain additional details or to clarify issues raised in the complaint or referral. See the [Complaint Questionnaire](#) beginning on page 9-17.
  - b. The Area Director may determine not to inspect a facility if he/she has a substantial reason to believe that the condition complained of is being or has been abated.
2. Despite the existence of a complaint, if the Area Director, believes there is no reasonable grounds that a violation or hazard exists, no inspection or inquiry will be conducted.
  - a. Where a formal complaint has been submitted, the complainant will be notified in writing of OSHA's intent not to conduct an inspection, the reasoning behind the determination, and the right to have the determination reviewed under [§1903.12](#). The justification for not inspecting will be noted in the case file.
  - b. In the event of a non-formal complaint or referral, if possible, the individual providing the information will be notified by appropriate means of OSHA's intent not to conduct an inquiry or inspection. The justification for not inspecting will be noted in the case file.
3. If the information contained in the complaint or referral meets at least one of the inspection criteria listed in [Paragraph I.C.](#) of this chapter, *Criteria Warranting an Inspection*, and there are reasonable grounds to believe that a violation or hazard exists, the Area Office is authorized to conduct an inspection.

- a. If appropriate, the Area Office will inform the individual providing the information that an inspection will be scheduled and that he or she will be advised of the results.
  - b. After the inspection, the Area Office will send the individual a letter addressing each information item, with reference to the citation(s) or a sufficiently detailed explanation for why a citation was not issued.
4. If an inspection is warranted, it will be initiated as soon as resources permit. Inspections resulting from formal complaints of serious hazards will normally be initiated within five working days of formalizing.

**I. Procedures for an Inquiry.**

1. If the complaint or referral does not meet the criteria for initiating an onsite inspection, an inquiry will be conducted. OSHA will promptly contact the employer to notify it of the complaint or referral and its allegation(s), and fax or email a confirming letter.
2. If a non-formal complaint is submitted by a current employee or a representative of employees that does not meet any of the inspection criteria, the complainant may be given five working days to make the complaint formal.
  - a. The complainant may come into the Area Office and sign the complaint, or mail or fax a signed complaint letter to OSHA. Additionally, an OSHA-7 form can be mailed or faxed to the complainant, if appropriate.
  - b. If the complaint is not made formal after five working days, after making a reasonable attempt to inform the complainant of the decision, OSHA will proceed with the inquiry process.
3. The employer will be advised of what information is needed to answer the inquiry and encouraged to respond by fax or email. See [FAP 01-00-003](#), *Federal Agency Safety and Health Programs*, dated May 17, 1996, for differing Federal Agency procedures. Employers are encouraged to do the following:
  - a. Immediately investigate and determine whether the complaint or referral information is valid and make any necessary corrections or modifications.



- b. Advise the Area Director either in writing or via email within five working days of the results of the investigation into the alleged complaint or referral information. At the discretion of the Area Director, the response time may be longer or shorter than five working days, depending on the circumstances. Additionally, although the employer is requested to respond within the above time frame, the employer may not be able to complete abatement action during that time, but is encouraged to do so.
  - c. Provide the Area Director with supporting documentation of the findings, including any applicable measurements or monitoring results, and photographs and/or videos that the employer believes would be helpful, as well as a description of any corrective action the employer has taken or is in the process of taking.
  - d. Post a copy of the letter from OSHA where it is readily accessible for review by all employees.
  - e. Return a copy of the signed Certificate of Posting to the Area Office.
  - f. If there is a recognized employee union or safety and health committee in the facility, provide it with a copy of OSHA's letter and the employer's response.
4. As soon as possible after contacting the employer, a notification letter will be faxed to the employer, or mailed where no fax is available. Sample letters to complainants and employers are provided on the NCR. Note that some of these letters are for private sector use and some are for Federal Agency use. If email is an acceptable means of responding, this should be indicated in the notification letter and the proper email address should be provided.
  5. If no employer response or an inadequate employer response is received after the allotted five working days, additional contact with the employer may be made before an inspection is scheduled. If the employer provides no response or an inadequate response, or if OSHA determines from other information that the condition has not been or is not being corrected, an inspection will be scheduled.
  6. The complainant will be advised of the employer's response, as well as the complainant's rights to dispute that response, and if the alleged hazard persists, of the right to request an inspection. When OSHA receives an adequate response from the employer and the

complainant does not dispute or object to the response, an onsite inspection normally will not be conducted.

7. If the complainant is a current employee or a representative of employees and wishes to dispute the employer's response, the disagreement must be submitted in writing and signed, thereby making the complaint formal.
  - a. If the employee disagreement takes the form of a written and signed formal complaint, see [Paragraph I.H.](#) of this chapter, *Procedures for an Inspection*.
  - b. If the employee disagreement does not take the form of a written and signed formal complaint, some discretion is allowed in situations where the information does not justify an onsite inspection. In such situations, the complainant will be notified of OSHA's intent not to conduct an inspection and the reasoning behind the determination. This decision should be thoroughly documented in the case file.
8. If a signed complaint is received after the complaint inquiry process has begun, the Area Director will determine whether the alleged hazard is likely to exist based on the employer's response and by contacting the complainant. The complainant will be informed that the inquiry has begun and that the complainant retains the right to request an onsite inspection if he/she disputes the results and believes the hazard still exists.
9. The complaint must not be closed until OSHA verifies that the hazard has been abated.

## J. **Complainant Protection.**

### 1. **Identity of the Complainant.**

Upon request of the complainant, his or her identity will be withheld from the employer in accordance with [Section 8\(f\)\(1\)](#) of the Act. No information will be given to the employer that would allow the employer to identify the complainant.

### 2. **Whistleblower Protection.**

- a. [Section 11\(c\)](#) of the Act provides protection for employees who believe that they have been the subject of an adverse employment action in retaliation for engaging in activities related to workplace safety or health. Any employee who believes that he or she has been discharged or otherwise

retaliated against by any person as a result of engaging in such activities may file a whistleblower complaint. The complaint must be filed within thirty days of the discharge or other retaliation.

- b. Complainants should always be advised of their [Section 11\(c\)](#) rights and protections upon initial contact with OSHA and whenever appropriate in subsequent communications.

#### K. **Recording in IMIS.**

Information about complaint inspections or inquiries must be recorded in IMIS following current instructions given in the IMIS manual. See OSHA Instruction IRT 01-00-007, *The IMIS Enforcement Data Processing Manual for Use with the NCR Computer System* (Table of Contents and Chapters 1 through 7), dated September 20, 1993.

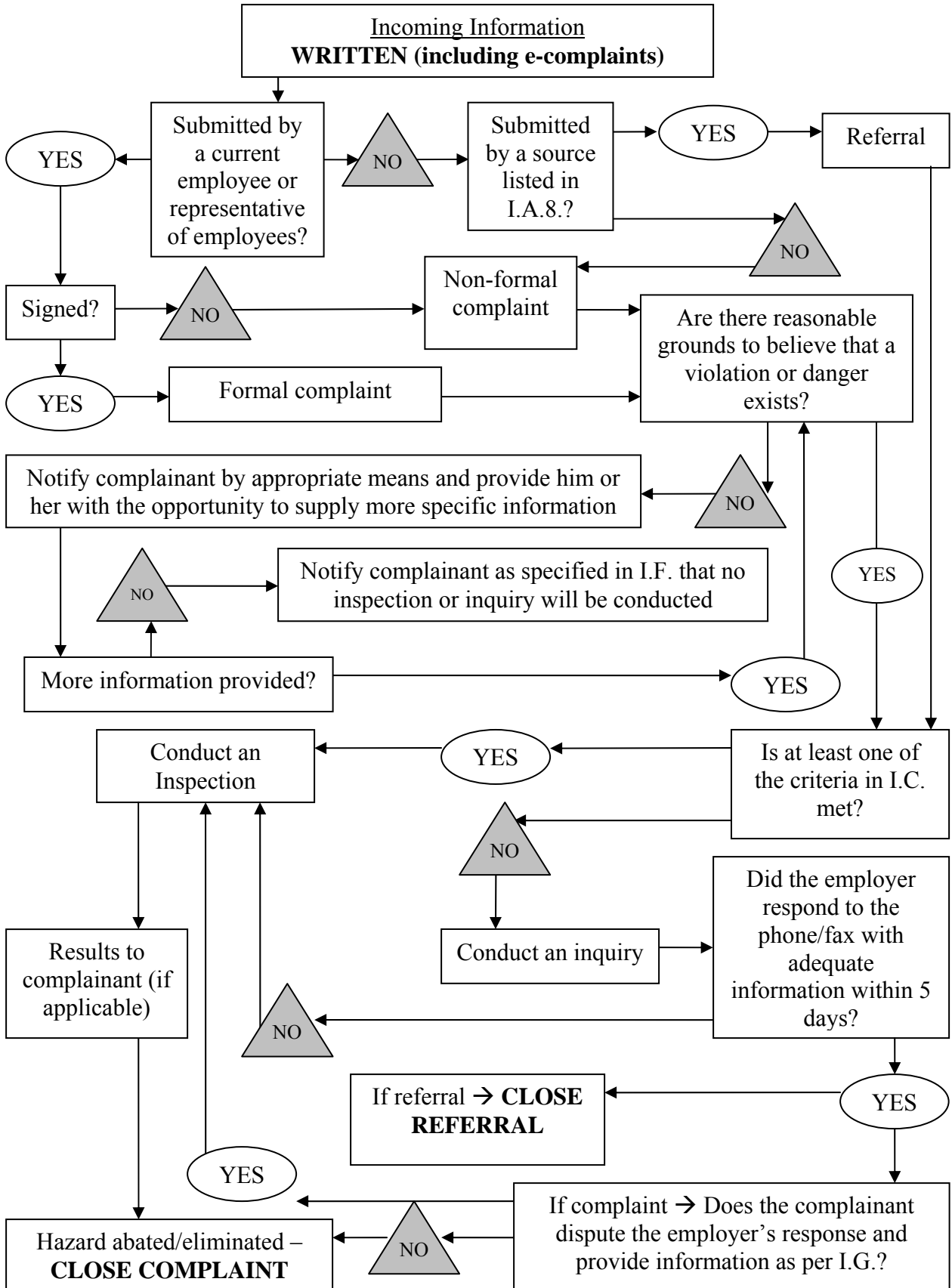
## II. **Whistleblower Complaints.**

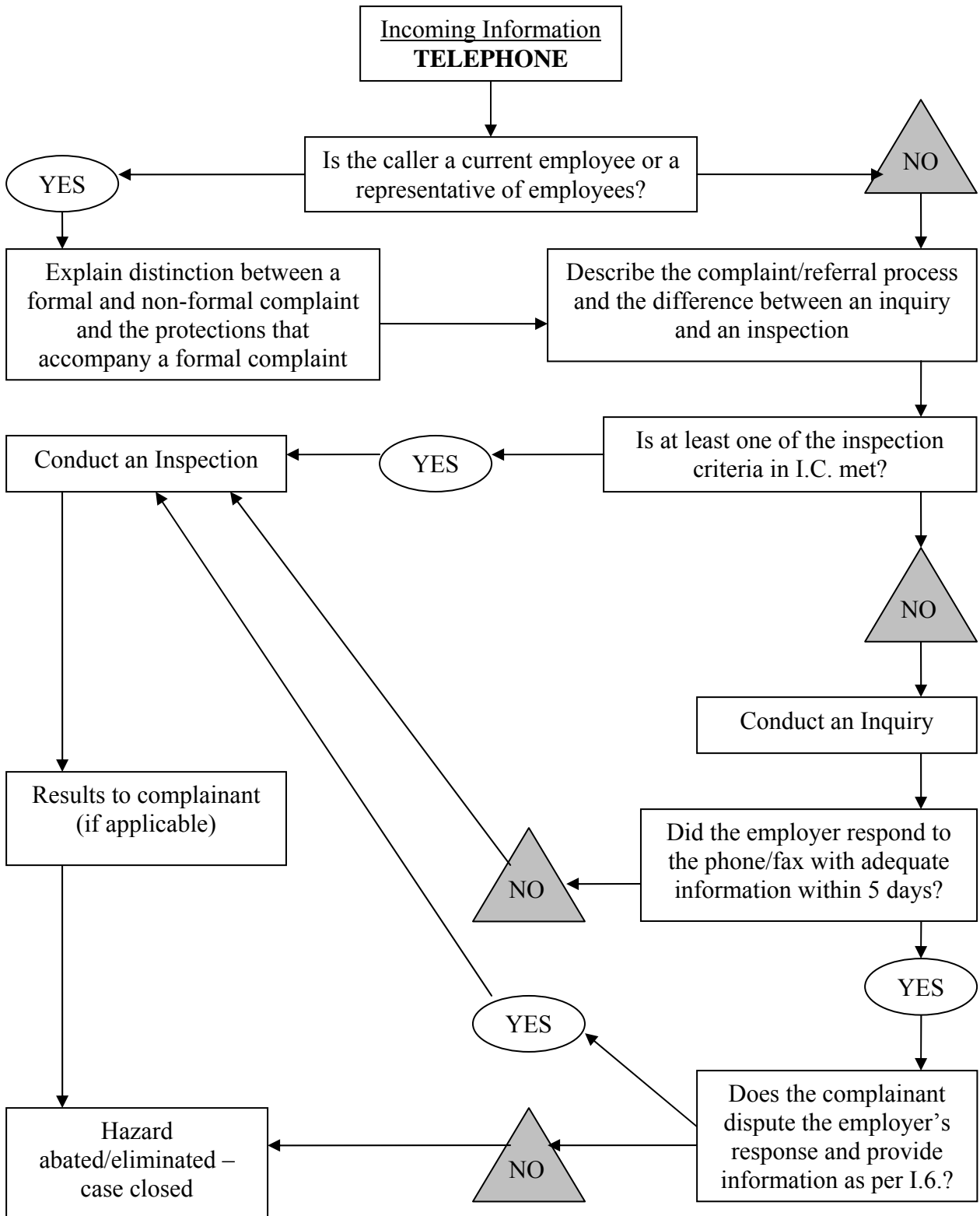
- A. OSHA enforces the whistleblower or anti-retaliation provisions of the OSH Act and sixteen other federal statutes. A desk reference summarizing these statutes can be found in the Whistleblower Investigations Manual on OSHA's Web site. These statutes generally provide that employers may not discharge or otherwise retaliate against an employee because the employee has reported an alleged violation related to the statute to an employer or a government agency, or otherwise exercised any rights provided to employees by the various statutes.
- B. When a retaliation complaint is made under any of the sixteen federal whistleblower statutes enforced by OSHA other than the OSH Act, the complainant should be referred promptly to the Regional Supervisory Investigator or Team Leader because the requirements for filing complaints under those statutes vary from those of the OSH Act. They should also be advised that there are statutory deadlines for filing these complaints.
- C. In the context of an OSHA enforcement action or a consultation activity, the complainant will be advised of the protection against retaliation afforded by [Section 11\(c\)](#) of the Act. A Section 11(c) complaint may be in any form, including an oral complaint made to a CSHO. Thus, if a person alleges that he has suffered an adverse action because of activity protected under Section 11(c), CSHOs will record that person's identifying information and the date and time of this initial contact on an OSHA-87 form and forward it to the Regional Supervisory Investigator or Team Leader for processing.

- D. In State Plan States, employees may file occupational safety and health retaliation complaints with Federal OSHA, the State, or both. Federal OSHA normally refers such complaints to the State Plan States for investigation. OSHA's Whistleblower Manual outlines the Agency's referral/deferral policies for such complaints.

**III. Decision Trees.**

- A. See tree on page 9-15 for OSHA enforcement action or consultation activity when information is obtained in writing.
- B. See tree on page 9-16 for OSHA enforcement action or consultation activity when information is obtained orally.





## Complaint Questionnaire

Obtain information from the caller by asking the following questions, where relevant.

### **For All Complaints:**

1. What is the specific safety or health hazard?

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2. Has the hazardous condition been brought to the employer's attention? If so, when?  
How?

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3. How are employees exposed to this hazard? Describe the unsafe or unhealthful working conditions; identify the location.

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4. What work is done in the unsafe/unhealthful area? Identify, as well as possible, the type and condition of equipment in use, the materials (e.g., chemicals) being used, the process/operation involved, and the kinds of work being done near the hazardous area. Have there been any recent chemical spills, releases, or accidents?

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5. With what frequency are employees doing the task that leads to the exposure? Continuously? Every day? Every week? Rarely? For how long at one time? How long has the condition existed (so far as can be determined)? Has it been brought to the employer's attention? Have any attempts been made to correct the condition, and, if so, who took these actions? What were the results?

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6. How many shifts are there? What time do they start? On which shift does the hazardous condition exist?

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7. What personal protective equipment (e.g., hearing protection, gloves or respirators) is required by the employer relevant to the alleged exposure? Is it used by employees? Include all PPE and describe it as specifically as possible. Include the manufacturer's name and any identifying numbers.

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8. How many people work in the establishment? How many are exposed to the hazardous conditions? How near do they get to the hazard?

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9. Is there an employee representative or a union in the establishment? Include the name, address, and telephone number of the union and/or the employee representative(s).

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**For Health Hazards**

10. Has the employer administered any tests to determine employee exposure levels to the hazardous conditions or substance? Describe these tests. Can the employees get the results (as required by the standard)? What were the results?

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11. What engineering controls are in place in the area(s) in which the exposed employees work? For instance, are there any fans or acoustical insulation in the area which may reduce exposure to the hazard?

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12. What administrative or work practice controls has the employer put in place?

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13. Do any employees have any symptoms that may have been caused by exposure to hazardous substances? Have any employees ever been treated by a physician for a work-related disease or condition? What was it?

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14. Have there been any "near-miss" incidents?

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15. Are respirators worn to protect against health hazards? If so, what kind? What exposures are they protecting against?

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16. If the complaint is related to noise, what, if any, hearing protection is provided to and worn by the employees?

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17. Do employees receive audiograms on a regular basis?

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**For Safety Hazards:**

18. Under what adverse or hazardous conditions are employees required to work? This should include conditions contributing to stress and “other” probability factors.

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19. Have any employees been injured as a result of this hazardous condition? Have there been any “near-miss” incidents?

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## Chapter 10

### INDUSTRY SECTORS

#### I. Agriculture.

##### A. Introduction.

Special situations arising in the agriculture industry, which is regulated under [29 CFR Part 1928](#) and the [General Duty Clause](#), are discussed in this section. Part 1928 covers “agricultural operations,” which include, but are not limited to, egg farms, poultry farms, livestock grain and feed lot operations, dairy farms, horse farms, hog farms, fish farms, and fur-bearing animal farms. OSHA has very few standards that are applicable to this industry. Part 1928 sets forth a few standards in full and lists particular Part 1910 standards which apply to agricultural operations. Part 1910 standards not listed do not apply. The General Duty Clause may be used to address hazards not covered by these standards.

##### B. Definitions.

###### 1. Agricultural Operations.

This term is not defined in [29 CFR Part 1928](#). Generally, agricultural operations would include any activities involved in the growing and harvesting of crops, plants, vines, fruit trees, nut trees, ornamental plants, egg production, the raising of livestock (including poultry and fish), as well as livestock products. The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission has ruled that activities integrally related to these core “agricultural operations” are also included within that term. *Darragh Company*, [9 BNA OSHC 1205](#), (Nos. 77-2555, 77-3074, and 77-3075, 1980) (delivery of feed to chicken farmer by integrator of poultry products is agricultural operation); *Marion Stevens dba Chapman & Stephens Company*, [5 BNA OSHC 1395](#) (No.13535, 1977) (removal of pipe to maintain irrigation system in citrus grove is agricultural operation). Post-harvest activities not on a farm, such as receiving, cleaning, sorting, sizing, weighing, inspecting, stacking, packaging and shipping produce, are not “agricultural operations.” *J. C. Watson Company*, [22 BNA OSHC 1235](#) (Nos. 05-0175 and 05-0176, 2008).

2. **Agricultural Employee.**

OSHA regulation [§1975.4\(b\)\(2\)](#) states that members of the immediate family of the farm employer **are not** regarded as employees.

3. **Farming Operation.**

This term is used in OSHA's Appropriations Act, and has been defined in [CPL 02-00-051](#), *Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act*, dated May 28, 1998, to mean any operation involved in the growing or harvesting of crops, the raising of livestock or poultry, or related activities conducted by a farmer on sites such as farms, ranches, orchards, dairy farms or similar farming operations.

These are employers engaged in businesses that have a two digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of 01 and three digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) of 111 (Agricultural Production - Crops); SIC 02 and NAICS 112 (Agricultural Production - Livestock and Animal Specialties); four digit SIC 0711 and six digit NAICS 115112 (Soil Preparation Services); SIC 0721 and NAICS 115112 (Crop Planting, Cultivating, and Protecting); SIC 0722 and NAICS 115113 (Crop Harvesting, Primarily by Machine); SIC 0761 and NAICS 115115 (Farm Labor Contractors and Crew Leaders); and SIC 0762 and NAICS 115116 (Farm Management Services).

4. **Post-Harvesting Processing.**

This is a term that is used in [CPL 02-00-051](#), *Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act*, dated May 28, 1998, in discussing enforcement guidance for small farming operations. Generally, post-harvest processing can be thought of as changing the character of the product (canning, making cider or sauces, etc.) or a higher degree of packaging versus field sorting in a shed for size.

C. **Appropriations Act Exemptions for Farming Operations.**

1. **Exempt Farming Operations.**

OSHA is limited by provisions in its Appropriations Act as to which employers it may inspect. Some of the Appropriations Act exemptions and limitations apply to small farming operations. Specifically, OSHA shall not inspect farming operations that have

10 or fewer employees **and** have had no temporary labor camp (TLC) activity within the prior 12 months.

2. **Non-Exempt Farming Operations.**

A farming operation with 10 or fewer employees that maintains a temporary labor camp or has maintained a temporary labor camp within the last twelve months **is not** exempt from inspection.

3. **State Plans States.**

States with OSHA-approved State Plans may enforce on small farms and provide consultation or training, provided that 100% state funds are used and the state has an accounting system in place to assure that no federal or matching state funds are expended on these activities.

4. **Enforcement Guidance for Small Farming Operations.**

OSHA’s Appropriations Act exempts qualifying small farming operations from enforcement or administration of **all** rules, regulations, standards or orders under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, including rules affecting consultation and technical assistance or education and training services..

Table 10-1, below, provides an at-a-glance reference to OSHA activities under its funding legislation.

Table 10-1: OSHA’s Appropriation Act Exemptions for Farming Operations

OSHA Activity	Farming operations with 10 or fewer employees (EEs) and no TLC activity within 12 months.	Farming operations with more than 10 EEs or a farming operation with an active TLC within 12 months.
Programmed Safety Inspections	Not Permitted	Permitted
Programmed Health Inspections	Not Permitted	Permitted
Employee Complaint	Not Permitted	Permitted
Fatality and/or two or more Hospitalizations	Not Permitted	Permitted
Imminent Danger	Not Permitted	Permitted
11(c) (whistleblower investigation)	Not Permitted	Permitted

Consultation & Technical Assistance	Not Permitted	Permitted
Education & Training	Not Permitted	Permitted
Conduct Surveys & Studies	Not Permitted	Permitted

NOTE: See [CPL 02-00-051](#), *Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Appropriations Act*, May 28, 1998, for additional information.

**D. Standards Applicable to Agriculture.**

OSHA has very few standards that apply to employers engaged in agricultural operations. Activities that take place after harvesting are considered general industry operations and are covered by OSHA's general industry standards.

**1. Agricultural Standards (Part 1928).**

- a. Roll-over Protective Structures (ROPS) for Tractors ([§1928.51](#), [1928.52](#), and [1928.53](#)).
- b. Guarding of Moving Machinery Parts of Farm Field Equipment, Farmstead Equipment, and Cotton Gins ([§1928.57](#)).
- c. Field Sanitation ([§1928.110](#)). See [Paragraph I.F.](#) of this chapter, *Wage & Hour/OSHA Shared Authority under Secretary's Order*, regarding Wage & Hour authority. OSHA has no authority to issue any citations under this standard.

**2. General Industry Standards (Part 1910).**

- a. Temporary Labor Camps ([§1910.142](#)). See [Chapter 12, Section II](#), *Temporary Labor Camps*.
- b. Storage and Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia ([§1910.111\(a\)](#) and [\(b\)](#)).
- c. Logging Operations ([§1910.266](#)).
- d. Specifications for Accident Prevention Signs and Tags – Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem ([§1910.145\(d\)\(10\)](#)).
- e. Hazard Communication ([§1910.1200](#)).
- f. Cadmium ([§1910.1027](#)).

- g. Retention of Department of Transportation Markings, Placards and Labels ([§1910.1201](#)).

Except to the extent specified above, the standards contained in subparts B through T and subpart Z of Part 1910 of Title 29 do not apply to agricultural operations.

3. **General Duty Clause.**

As in any situation where no standard is applicable, [Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) of the OSH Act may be used; all the elements for a Section 5(a)(1) citation must be met. See [Chapter 4, Section III, General Duty Clause](#).

- E. **Pesticides.**

1. **Coverage.**

- a. Pursuant to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has jurisdiction over employee protection relating to pesticides (which also includes herbicides, fungicides and rodenticides). The EPA Worker Protection Standard (WPS) protects employees on farms, forests, nurseries, and greenhouses from occupational exposure to agricultural pesticides. The WPS includes provisions for personal protective equipment, labeling, employee notification, safety training, safety posters, decontamination supplies, emergency assistance, and restricted field entry. See [40 CFR Part 170](#), Worker Protection Standard.
- b. The regulation covers two types of employees:
  - **Pesticide Handlers.** Those who mix, load, or apply agricultural pesticides; clean or repair pesticide application equipment; or assist with the application of pesticides in any way.
  - **Agricultural Workers.** Those who perform tasks related to the cultivation and harvesting of plants on farms or in greenhouses, nurseries, or forests – such as carrying nursery stock, repotting plants, or watering – related to the production of agricultural plants on an agricultural establishment.
- c. For all pesticide use, including uses not covered by [40 CFR Part 170](#), it is a violation of FIFRA to use a registered pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling. Thus, OSHA has no

authority to issue any citations related to pesticide exposures, pursuant to [Section 4\(b\)\(1\)](#) of the OSH Act. In the event that a CSHO should encounter any cases of pesticide exposure or the lack of an appropriate pesticide label on containers, a referral shall be made to the local EPA office or to state agencies administering pesticide laws.

- d. EPA also has jurisdiction in non-agriculture situations where pesticides are being applied by pest control companies. This would include, but not be limited to, applications in and around factories, warehouses, office buildings, and personal residences. OSHA may not cite its Hazard Communication standard in such situations.

## 2. **OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard.**

Although OSHA will not cite employers covered under EPA's WPS with regard to hazard communication requirements for pesticides, agricultural employers otherwise covered by OSHA are still responsible for having a hazard communication program for all hazardous chemicals that are not considered pesticides.

## F. **Wage & Hour/OSHA Shared authority under Secretary's Order.**

Since 1997, the Wage & Hour Division (WHD) of the Employment Standards Administration (ESA) has had shared authority with OSHA over two standards: the Field Sanitation standard ([1928.110](#)), and the Temporary Labor Camp standard ([1910.142](#)). See Delegation of Authorities and Assignment of Responsibilities to the Assistant Secretary for Employment Standards and Other Officials in the Employment Standards Administration (*Federal Register*, January 2, 1997 ([62 FR 107](#))) and Secretary's Order 5-2002: Delegation of Authority and Assignment of Responsibility to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, *Federal Register*, October 22, 2002 ([67 FR 65007](#)).

### 1. **Field Sanitation Standard.**

- a. The WHD has sole federal enforcement authority for this standard, including the issuing of citations.
- b. OSHA, therefore, shall not issue citations under this standard.
- c. The provisions of the Field Sanitation standard are also applicable to reforestation activities involving "hand-labor operations" as defined by the standard. This position regarding reforestation activities was developed through extensive intra-agency discussions and was intended to provide, in the absence



of a clear and unambiguous exemption of this activity from the provisions of the standard, the broadest possible coverage for these employees.

2. **Temporary Labor Camp (TLC) Standard.**

Under the Secretary's Order, enforcement authority for the TLC standard is split between the WHD and OSHA. See [Chapter 12, Section II, Temporary Labor Camps](#), for a detailed discussion on Temporary Labor Camps.

3. **Compliance Interpretation Authority.**

WHD has sole interpretation authority for both the Field Sanitation and the Temporary Labor Camp standards, even over those temporary labor camp areas for which OSHA has enforcement authority.

4. **Standard Revision and Variance Authority.**

OSHA retains all authority for revisions of both the Field Sanitation and the Temporary Labor Camp standards, as well as the evaluation and granting of temporary and permanent variances.

5. **State Plan States.**

- a. Eight of the twenty-two jurisdictions (21 states and Puerto Rico) that have OSHA-approved state plans covering private sector employment elected not to enforce the Field Sanitation standard in agriculture and the Temporary Labor Camp standard, except with respect to egg, poultry, red meat production, and post-harvesting processing of agricultural and horticultural commodities. Thus, WHD enforces these standards, except as noted above, in the following states: Alaska, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming.
- b. The 14 other jurisdictions with OSHA-approved state plans covering private sector employment have retained enforcement authority for the Field Sanitation and Temporary Labor Camp standards in agriculture. They are Arizona, California, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.

**II. Construction [Reserved].**

**III. Maritime [Reserved].**

## Chapter 11

# IMMINENT DANGER, FATALITY, CATASTROPHE, AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

### I. Imminent Danger Situations.

#### A. General.

##### 1. Definition of Imminent Danger.

[Section 13\(a\)](#) of the Act defines imminent danger as "...any conditions or practices in any place of employment which are such that a danger exists which could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm immediately or before the imminence of such danger can be eliminated through the enforcement procedures otherwise provided by this Act."

##### 2. Conditions of Imminent Danger.

The following conditions must be present in order for a hazard to be considered an imminent danger:

- a. Death or serious harm must be threatened; AND
- b. It must be reasonably likely that a serious accident could occur immediately OR, if not immediately, then before abatement would otherwise be implemented.

*NOTE: For a health hazard, exposure to the toxic substance or other hazard must cause harm to such a degree as to shorten life or be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH) or cause substantial reduction in physical or mental efficiency or health, even though the resulting harm may not manifest itself immediately.*

#### B. Pre-Inspection Procedures.

##### 1. Imminent Danger Report Received by the Field.

- a. After the Area Director or designee receives a report of imminent danger, he or she will evaluate the inspection requirements and assign a CSHO to conduct the inspection.
- b. Every effort will be made to conduct the imminent danger inspection on the same day that the report is received. In any

case, the inspection will be conducted no later than the day after the report is received.

- c. When an immediate inspection cannot be made, the Area Director or designee will contact the employer immediately, obtain as many pertinent details as possible about the situation, and attempt to have any employee(s) affected by the imminent danger voluntarily removed, if necessary.
  - a. A record of what steps, if any, the employer intends to take in order to eliminate the danger will be included in the case file.
  - b. This notification is considered an advance notice of inspection to be handled in accordance with the advance notice procedures described below.

## 2. **Advance Notice.**

- a. [§1903.6](#) authorizes advance notice of an inspection of potential imminent danger situations in order to encourage employers to eliminate dangerous conditions as quickly as possible.
- b. Where an immediate inspection cannot be made after the Area Office is alerted to an imminent danger condition and advance notice will speed the elimination of the hazard, the Team Leader or CSHO, at the direction of the Area Director, will give notice of an impending inspection to the employer.
- c. Where advance notice of an inspection is given to an employer, it shall also be given to the authorized employee representative, if present. If the inspection is in response to a formal [Section 8\(f\)\(1\)](#) complaint, the complainant will be informed of the inspection unless this will cause a delay in speeding the elimination of the hazard.

## C. **Imminent Danger Inspection Procedures.**

All alleged imminent danger situations brought to the attention of or discovered by CSHOs while conducting any inspection will be inspected immediately. Additional inspection activity will take place only after the imminent danger condition has been resolved.

### 1. **Scope of Inspection.**

CSHOs may consider expanding the scope of an imminent danger inspection based on additional hazards discovered or brought to their attention during the inspection.

2. **Procedures for Inspection.**

- a. Every imminent danger inspection will be conducted as expeditiously as possible.
- b. CSHOs will offer the employer and employee representatives the opportunity to participate in the worksite inspection, unless the immediacy of the hazard makes it impractical to delay the inspection in order to afford time to reach the area of the alleged imminent danger.
- c. As soon as reasonably practicable after discovery of existing conditions or practices constituting an imminent danger, the employer shall be informed of such hazards. The employer shall be asked to notify affected employees and to remove them from exposure to the imminent danger hazard. The employer should be encouraged to voluntarily take appropriate abatement measures to promptly eliminate the danger.

D. **Elimination of the Imminent Danger.**

1. **Voluntary Elimination of the Imminent Danger.**

a. **How to Voluntarily Eliminate a Hazard.**

- Voluntary elimination of the hazard has been accomplished when the employer:
  - Immediately removes affected employees from the danger area;
  - Immediately removes or abates the hazardous condition; and
  - Gives satisfactory assurance that the dangerous condition will remain abated before permitting employees to work in the area.
- Satisfactory assurance can be evidenced by:
  - After removing the affected employees, immediate corrective action is initiated, designed to bring the dangerous condition, practice, means or method of operation, or process into compliance, which, when completed, would permanently eliminate the dangerous condition; or

- A good faith representation by the employer that permanent corrective action will be taken as soon as possible, **and** that affected employees will not be permitted to work in the area of the imminent danger until the condition is permanently corrected; or
- A good faith representation by the employer that permanent corrective action will be instituted as soon as possible. Where personal protective equipment can eliminate the imminent danger, such equipment will be issued and its use strictly enforced until the condition is permanently corrected.

*NOTE: Through onsite observations, CSHOs shall ensure that any/all representations from the employer that an imminent danger has been abated are accurate.*

**b. Where a Hazard is Voluntarily Eliminated.**

If an employer voluntarily and completely eliminates the imminent danger without unreasonable delay:

- No imminent danger legal proceeding shall be instituted;
- The OSHA-8, Notice of an Alleged Imminent Danger, does not need to be completed;
- An appropriate citation(s) and notice(s) of penalty will be proposed for issuance with an appropriate notation on the OSHA-1B to document corrective actions; and
- CSHOs will inform the affected employees or their authorized representative(s) that, although an imminent danger had existed, danger has been eliminated. They will also be informed of any steps taken by the employer to eliminate the hazardous condition.

**2. Refusal to Eliminate an Imminent Danger.**

- a. If the employer does not or cannot voluntarily eliminate the hazard or remove affected employees from the exposure and the danger is immediate, CSHOs will immediately consult with

the Area Director or designee and obtain permission to post an OSHA-8, Notice of an Alleged Imminent Danger.

- b. Area Directors or designees will then contact the Regional Administrator and determine whether to consult with the RSOL to obtain a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO).
- c. The employer will be advised that [Section 13](#) of the Act gives United States district courts the authority to restrain any condition or practice that poses an imminent danger to employees.

*NOTE: The Agency has no authority to order the closing of a worksite or to order affected employees to leave the area of the imminent danger or the workplace.*

- d. CSHOs will notify affected employees and the employee representative that an OSHA-8 has been posted and will advise them of the [Section 11\(c\)](#) discrimination protections under the OSH Act. Employees will be advised that they have the right to refuse to perform work in the area where the imminent danger exists.
- e. The Area Director or designee and the Regional Administrator, in consultation with the RSOL, will assess the situation and, if warranted, make arrangements for the expedited initiation of court action, or instruct the CSHO to remove the OSHA-8.

### 3. **When Harm Will Occur Before Abatement is Required.**

- a. If CSHOs have clear evidence that harm will occur before abatement is required (i.e., before a final order of the Commission in a contested case or before a TRO can be obtained), they will confer with the Area Director or designee to determine a course of action.

*NOTE: In some cases, the evidence may not support the finding of an imminent danger at the time of the physical inspection, but rather after further evaluation of the case file or presence of additional evidence.*

- b. As appropriate, an imminent danger notice may be posted at the time citations are delivered or even after the notice of contest is filed.

## II. Fatality and Catastrophe Investigations.

### A. Definitions.

#### 1. Fatality.

An employee death resulting from a work-related incident or exposure; in general, from an accident or an illness caused by or related to a workplace hazard.

#### 2. Catastrophe.

The hospitalization of three or more employees resulting from a work-related incident or exposure; in general, from an accident or an illness caused by a workplace hazard.

#### 3. Hospitalization.

Being admitted as an **inpatient** to a hospital or equivalent medical facility for examination, observation or treatment.

#### 4. Incident Requiring a Coordinated Federal Response.

An incident involving multiple fatalities, extensive injuries, massive toxic exposures, extensive property damage, or one that presents potential employee injury and generates widespread media interest.

### B. Initial Report.

1. The Fatality/Catastrophe Report Form (OSHA-36) is a pre-inspection form that must be completed for all fatalities or catastrophes unless knowledge of the event occurs during the course of an inspection at the establishment involved. The purpose of the OSHA-36 is to provide OSHA with enough information to determine whether or not to investigate the event. It is also used as a research tool by OSHA and other agencies.
2. If, after the initial report, the Area Office becomes aware of information that affects the decision to investigate, the OSHA-36 should be updated. If the additional information does not affect the decision to investigate, or the investigation has been initiated or completed, the OSHA-36 need not be updated. After updating the OSHA-36, it should be resubmitted to the National Office.



3. See additional details on completing the OSHA-36 in [Paragraph II.I](#) of this chapter, *Recording and Tracking for Fatality/Catastrophe Inspections*.

**C. Investigation Procedures.**

1. All fatalities and catastrophes will be thoroughly investigated in an attempt to determine the cause of the event, whether a violation of OSHA safety and health standards, regulations, or the general duty clause occurred, and any effect the violation had on the accident. Each Regional Administrator will establish a procedure to ensure that each fatality or catastrophe is thoroughly investigated and processed in accordance with established policy.
2. The investigation should be initiated as soon as possible after receiving an initial report of the incident, ideally within one working day, by an appropriately trained and experienced compliance officer assigned by the Area Director or designee. The Area Director or designee determines the scope of the fatality/catastrophe investigation. All investigations must be completed in an expeditious manner.
3. Inspections following fatalities or catastrophes should include videotaping as a method of documentation and gathering evidence when appropriate. The use of photography is also encouraged in documenting and evidence gathering.
4. As in all inspections, under no circumstances should OSHA personnel conducting fatality/catastrophe investigations be unprotected against a hazard encountered during the course of an investigation. OSHA personnel must use appropriate personal protective equipment and take all necessary precautions to avoid and/or prevent occupational exposure to potential hazards that may be encountered.

**D. Interview Procedures.**

1. **Identify and Interview Persons.**
  - a. Identify and interview all persons with firsthand knowledge of the incident, including first responders, police officers, medical responders, and management, as early as possible in the investigation. The sooner a witness is interviewed, the more accurate and candid the witness statement will be.
  - b. If an employee representative is actively involved in the inspection, he or she can serve as a valuable resource by

assisting in identifying employees who might have information relevant to the investigation.

- c. Conduct employee interviews privately, outside the presence of the employer. Employees are not required to inform their employer that they provided a statement to OSHA.
- d. When interviewing:
  - Properly document the contact information of all parties because follow-up interviews with a witness are sometimes necessary.
  - When appropriate, reduce interviews to writing and have the witness sign the document. Transcribe video- and audio-taped interviews and have the witness sign the transcription.
  - Read the statement to the witness and attempt to obtain agreement. Note any witnesses' refusal to sign or initial his/her statement.
  - Ask the interviewee to initial any changes or corrections made to his/her statement.
  - Advise interviewee of OSHA whistleblower protections.
- e. See [Chapter 3](#), *Inspection Procedures*, for additional information on conducting interviews.

## 2. **Informer's Privilege.**

- a. The informer's privilege allows the government to withhold the **identity** of individuals who provide information about the violation of laws, including OSHA rules and regulations. The identity of witnesses will remain confidential to the extent possible. However, inform each witness that disclosure of his/her identity may be necessary in connection with enforcement or court actions.
- b. The informer's privilege also protects the contents of statements to the extent that disclosure would reveal the witness' identity. When the contents of a statement will not disclose the identity of the informant (i.e., statements that do not reveal the witness' job title, work area, job duties, or other information that would tend to reveal the individual's identity),

the privilege does not apply and such statements may be released.

- c. Inform each witness that his/her interview statements may be released if he or she authorizes such a release or if he or she voluntarily discloses the statement to others, resulting in a waiver of the privilege.
- d. Inform witnesses in a tactful and nonthreatening manner that making a false statement to a CSHO during the course of an investigation could be a criminal offense. Making a false statement, upon conviction, is punishable by up to \$10,000 or six months in jail, or both.

**E. Investigation Documentation.**

Document all fatality and catastrophe investigations thoroughly.

**1. Personal Data – Victim.**

Potential items to be documented include: Name; Address; Email address; Telephone; Age; Sex; Nationality; Job Title; Date of Employment; Time in Position; Job being done at the time of the incident; Training for job being performed at time of the incident; Employee deceased/injured; Nature of injury – fracture, amputation, etc.; and Prognosis of injured employee.

**2. Incident Data.**

Potential items to be documented include: How and why did the incident occur; the physical layout of the worksite; sketches/drawings; measurements; video/audio/photos to identify sources, and whether the accident was work-related.

**3. Equipment or Process Involved.**

Potential items to be documented include: Equipment type; Manufacturer; Model; Manufacturer's instructions; Kind of process; Condition; Misuse; Maintenance program; Equipment inspection (logs, reports); Warning devices (detectors); Tasks performed; How often equipment is used; Energy sources and disconnecting means identified; and Supervision or instruction provided to employees involved in the accident.

4. **Witness Statements.**

Potential witnesses include: the Public; Fellow employees; Management; Emergency responders (e.g., police department, fire department); and Medical personnel (e.g., medical examiner).

5. **Safety and Health Program.**

Potential questions include: Does the employer have a safety and/or health program? Does the program address the type of hazard that resulted in the fatality/catastrophe? How are the elements of the program specifically implemented at the worksite?

6. **Multi-Employer Worksite**

Describe the contractual and in practice relationships of the employer with the other employers involved with the work being performed at the worksite.

7. **Records Request.**

Potential records include: Disciplinary Records; Training Records; and Next of Kin information.

*NOTE: Next of kin information should be gathered as soon as possible to ensure that condolence letters can be sent in a timely manner.*

F. **Potential Criminal Penalties in Fatality and Catastrophe Cases.**

1. **Criminal Penalties.**

- a. [Section 17\(e\)](#) of the Act provides criminal penalties for an employer who is convicted of having willfully violated an OSHA standard, rule or order when the violation results in the death of an employee. However, Section 17(e) does not apply to violations of the general duty clause. When there are violations of an OSHA standard, rule or order, or a violation of the general duty clause, criminal provisions relating to false statements and obstruction of justice may also be relevant.
- b. The circumstances surrounding all occupationally-related fatalities will be evaluated to determine whether the fatality was caused by a willful violation of a standard, thus creating the basis for a possible criminal referral. The evidence obtained during a fatality investigation is of paramount importance and must be carefully gathered and considered.

- c. Early in the investigation, the Area Director or designee, in consultation with the investigator, should make an initial determination as to whether there is potential for a criminal violation. The decision will be based on consideration of the following:
  - A fatality has occurred.
  - There is evidence that an OSHA standard has been violated and that the violation contributed to the death.
  - There is reason to believe that the employer was aware of the requirements of the standard and knew it was in violation of the standard, or that the employer was plainly indifferent to employee safety.
  - If the Regional Administrator agrees with the Area Director or designee's assessment of the case, the Regional Administrator will notify the RSOL. At the discretion of the Regional Administrator and the Area Director or designee, and dependent upon Regional procedures in place, a Regional team or trained criminal investigator may assist in or perform portions of an investigation.
  - When there is a potential criminal referral in a case, it is essential that the Regional Administrator and/or the Area Director involve the RSOL's Office in the early stages of the investigation during the evidence gathering process.

## 2. **Additional Prosecution.**

In addition to criminal prosecution under [Section 17\(e\)](#) of the OSH Act, employers may potentially face prosecution under a number of other sections of the United States Code, including, but not limited to:

- a. Crimes and Criminal Procedures, for actions such as conspiracy, making false statements, fraud, obstruction of justice, and destruction, alteration or falsification of records during a federal investigation.
- b. The Clean Water Act.
- c. The Clean Air Act.

- d. The Resource Recovery and Conservation Act (RCRA).
  - e. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).
3. **Procedures for Criminal Referral.**

When a case is forwarded from the Regional Office to the RSOL for criminal review, advise the Director of Enforcement Programs (or, when appropriate, the Director of Construction Programs). Provide follow-up reports to indicate any subsequent actions.

G. **Families of Victims.**

1. **Contacting Family Members.**

Family members of employees involved in fatal or catastrophic occupational accidents or illnesses shall be contacted early in the investigation and given the opportunity to discuss the circumstances of the accident or illness. OSHA staff contacting family members must exercise tact and good judgment in their discussions.

2. **Information Letter.**

The standard information letter will normally be sent to the individual(s) listed as the emergency contact on the victim's employment records (if available) and/or the otherwise determined next of kin within 5 working days of determining the victim's identity and verifying the proper address where communications should be sent.

*NOTE: In some circumstances, it may not be appropriate to follow these exact procedures; i.e., in the case of a small business, the owner or supervisor may be a relative of the victim. Modify the form letter to take any special circumstances into account or do not send the letter, as appropriate.*

3. **Letter to Victim's Emergency Contact.**

In addition to the standard information letter sent by the Area Director or designee, the Assistant Secretary also sends a letter to the victim's emergency contact or otherwise verifiable next of kin.

4. **Interviewing the Family.**

- a. When taking a statement from families of the victim(s), explain that the interview will be handled following the same procedures as those in effect for witness interviews. Sensitivity and professionalism are required during these interviews. Carefully evaluate the information received and attempt to corroborate it during the investigation.
- b. Maintain follow-up contact with key family members or other contact persons so that these parties can be kept up-to-date on the status of the investigation. Provide family members or their legal representatives with a copy of all citations, subsequent settlement agreements or Review Commission decisions as these are issued, or as soon thereafter as possible. However, such information will only be provided to family members after it has been provided to the employer.
- c. The releasable portions of the case file will not be made available to family members until after the contest period has passed and no contest has been filed. If a contest is filed, the case file will not be made available until after the litigation is completed. Additionally, if a criminal referral is under consideration or has been made, the case file may not be released to the family. Notify the family of these policies and inform them that this is necessary so that any potential litigation is not compromised.

H. **Public Information Policy.**

OSHA's public information policy regarding response to fatalities and catastrophes is to explain Federal presence to the news media. It is not to issue periodic updates on the progress of the investigation. The Area Director and his or her designee will normally handle response to media inquiries.

I. **Recording and Tracking for Fatality/Catastrophe Investigations.**

1. **Fatality/Catastrophe Report Form (OSHA-36).**

The OSHA-36 is a pre-inspection form that must be completed for all fatalities and catastrophes unless knowledge of the event occurs during the course of an inspection at the establishment involved. Processing of the OSHA-36 shall be as follows:

- a. The Area Office will complete and enter into IMIS an OSHA-36 for all fatalities and catastrophes as soon as possible after

learning of the event. As much information as is known at the time of the initial report should be provided; however, all items on the OSHA-36 need not be completed at the time of this initial report. Wherever possible, the age of the victim(s) should be provided, because this information is used for research by OSHA and other agencies.

- b. The Regional Office or Area Office will fax an OSHA-36 for each event that will be investigated to the Director of Enforcement Programs (or, as appropriate, the Director of Construction) within 48 hours of receipt.
- c. If additional information relating to the event becomes available that affects the decision to investigate, the OSHA-36 is to be updated and resubmitted via fax to the National Office.
- d. In addition, the Regional Administrator will contact the Deputy Director of Enforcement Programs (or Construction, as appropriate) to ensure prompt notification of the National Office of major events, such as those likely to generate significant public or congressional interest.

## 2. **Investigation Summary Report (OSHA-170).**

- a. The OSHA-170 is used to summarize the results of investigations of all events that involve fatalities, catastrophes, amputations, hospitalizations of two or more days, have generated significant publicity, and/or have resulted in significant property damage. An OSHA-170 must be opened, logged into IMIS, and saved as final as soon as the agency becomes aware of a workplace fatality and determines that it is within its jurisdiction, even if most of the data fields are left blank. The information on this form enables the Agency to track fatalities and summarizes circumstances surrounding the event.

*NOTE: The two-day hospitalization criterion is an cutoff to preclude completing an OSHA-170 for events that may not be serious. There is no relationship between this criterion and the definition of hospitalization in [Section II. A.](#) of this chapter, Definitions.*

- b. For fatality/catastrophe investigations, the OSHA-170 will be:
  - Opened in IMIS at the beginning of the investigation and saved as *final*, even if most of the data fields are left blank, so that the Agency can track



fatality/catastrophe investigations in a close to “real time” fashion.

- Modified as needed during the investigation to account for updated information.
  - Updated with all data fields completely and accurately completed at the conclusion of the investigation, including a thorough narrative description of the incident.
- c. The OSHA-170 narrative should not be a copy of the summary provided on the OSHA-36 pre-inspection form. The narrative must comprehensively describe the characteristics of the worksite; the employer and its relationship with other employers, if relevant; the employee task/activity being performed; the related equipment used; and other pertinent information in enough detail to provide a third party reader of the narrative with a mental picture of the fatal incident and the factual circumstances surrounding the event.
- d. Only one OSHA-170 should be submitted for an event, regardless of how many inspections take place. If a subsequent event occurs during the course of an inspection, a new OSHA-170 for that event should be submitted.

**EXAMPLE 11-1:** A fatality occurs in employer’s facility in August. Both a safety and health inspection are initiated. One OSHA-170 should be filed to summarize the results of the inspections that resulted from the August fatality. However, in September, while the employer’s facility is still undergoing the inspections, a second fatality occurs. In this case, a *second* OSHA-170 should be submitted for the second fatality and an additional inspection should be opened.

### 3. **Immigrant Language Questionnaire (IMMLANG).**

- a. The [IMMLANG Questionnaire](#) is designed to allow the Agency to track fatalities among Hispanic and immigrant employees and to assess the impact of potential language barriers and training deficiencies on fatal accidents. Information for this questionnaire should be collected as early in the investigation as possible, as the availability of immigrants for questioning later in the process is often uncertain.

- b. The IMMLANG Questionnaire shall be completed before the conclusion of a fatality investigation according to the procedures outlined in the December 16, 2003, [memorandum](#) from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne to the Regional Administrators, It should be completed only if “IMMLANG-Y” is indicated on the OSHA-1 (N-10 Optional Information Code). The Questionnaire is not to be completed if “IMMLANG-N” is indicated on the OSHA-1.
  - c. The IMMLANG Questionnaire shall be submitted via the intranet. A copy of the completed questionnaire should be printed and placed in the case file.
4. **Related Event Code (REC).**

The OSHA-1B provides specific supplemental information documenting hazards and violations. If any item cited is directly related to the occurrence of the fatality or catastrophe, the related event code “A” shall be entered in block 13. If multiple related event codes apply, the only code that has priority over relation to a fatality/catastrophe (“A”) is relation to an imminent danger (“I”).

J. **Pre-Citation Review.**

1. Because cases involving a fatality may result in civil or criminal enforcement actions, the Area Director is responsible for reviewing all fatality and catastrophe investigation case files to ensure that the case has been properly developed and documented in accordance with the procedures outlined here.
2. The Area Director is responsible for ensuring that an OSHA-170 is reported to IMIS for each incident (see [Paragraph II.I.2.](#) of this chapter, *Investigation Summary Report (OSHA-170)*).
3. Review all proposed violation-by-violation penalties in accordance with [CPL 02-00-080](#), *Handling of Cases to be Proposed for Violation-by-Violation Penalties*, dated October 21, 1990.
4. Review citations covered by Regional OSHA/SOL workload agreements in accordance with those agreements.
5. Each Regional Administrator should establish a procedure to ensure that each fatality or catastrophe is thoroughly investigated and processed in accordance with established policy.

**K. Post-Citation Procedures/Abatement Verification.**

The regulation governing abatement verification is found at [§1903.19](#), and OSHA's enforcement policies and procedures for this regulation are outlined in [Chapter 7](#), *Post-Citation Procedures and Abatement Verification*.

1. Due to the transient nature of many of the worksites where fatalities occur and because the worksite may be destroyed by the catastrophic event, it is frequently impossible to conduct follow-up inspections. In such cases, the Area Director should obtain abatement verification from the employer, along with an assurance that appropriate safety and health programs have been implemented to prevent the hazard(s) from recurring.
2. While site closure due to the completion of the cited project is an acceptable method of abatement, it can only be accepted as abatement without certification where a CSHO directly verifies that closure; otherwise, certification by the employer is required. Follow-up inspections need not be conducted if the CSHO has verified abatement during the inspection or if the employer has provided other proof of abatement.
3. Where the worksite continues to exist, OSHA will normally conduct a follow-up inspection if serious citations have been issued.
4. Include abatement language and safety and health system implementation language in any subsequent settlement agreement.
5. If there is a violation that requires abatement verification, field 22 on the OSHA1-B must be completed with the date of abatement verified.
6. If the case is an Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) case, follow-up inspections will be conducted in accordance with paragraph XII.A. of the *Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP) Directive*, [CPL 02-00-145](#), dated January 1, 2008. Follow-up inspections will normally be conducted even if abatement of cited violations have been verified through abatement verification.

**L. Audit Procedures.**

The following procedures will be implemented to evaluate compliance with, and the effectiveness of, fatality/catastrophe investigation procedures:

1. Regional Offices will incorporate the review and analysis of fatality/catastrophe files into their audit functions and include their findings in the regular audit reports to the National Office. The review and analysis will utilize random case files to address the following:
    - a. *Inspection Findings.* Ensure that hazards have been appropriately addressed and violations have been properly classified. Also ensure that criminal referrals are made when appropriate.
    - b. *Documentation.* Ensure that the OSHA-170 narrative and data fields and the OSHA-1B narrative have been completed accurately and detailed enough to allow for analysis at the national level of the circumstances of fatal incidents. Ensure that the IMMLANG Questionnaire is completed, if relevant.
    - c. *Construction Fatalities.* Ensure that the case file has been copied and forwarded to the University of Tennessee in accordance with the memoranda to the Regional Administrators from H. Berrien Zettler, Deputy Director, Directorate of Construction, dated September 12 and 13, 2000 (via email) and from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne dated May 14, 2003 and February 18, 2004.
    - d. *Settlement Terms.* Ensure that settlement terms are appropriate, including violation reclassification, penalty reductions, and additional abatement language.
    - e. *Abatement Verification.* Ensure that abatement verification has been obtained.
    - f. Review IMIS reports to identify any trends or cases that may indicate that a further review of those cases may be necessary.
- M. **Relationship of Fatality and Catastrophe Investigations to Other Programs and Activities.**
1. **Homeland Security.**

OSHA's *National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP)*, as contained in [HSO 01-00-001](#), dated December 18, 2003, clarifies the procedures and policies for OSHA's National Office and Regional Offices during responses to incidents of national significance. Generally, OSHA will provide technical assistance

and consultation in coordinating the protection of response worker and recovery worker safety and health. When the President makes an emergency declaration under the Stafford Act, the National Response Framework (NRF) is activated. The NEMP can then be activated by the Assistant Secretary, the Deputy Assistant Secretary, or by request from a Regional Administrator. Whether OSHA will conduct a formal fatality or catastrophe investigation in such a situation will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

2. **Enhanced Enforcement Program.**

- a. Inspections that result in citations being issued for at least one of the following are considered Enhanced Enforcement cases:
  - a. A fatality inspection in which there is at least one serious violation that is also classified as a repeated or a willful, related to the death;
  - b. A fatality inspection in which there is at least one serious violation related to the death, **and** the employer has an OSHA history of violations similar to the violation that led to the current fatality that consisted of at least one serious, willful, or repeated violation within the last three years;
  - c. A fatality inspection in which there is at least one serious violation related to the death, **and** another fatality has occurred within the last three years;
  - d. An inspection that results in three or more serious violations that are also classified as willful or repeated, **and** the employer has an OSHA history of violations similar in kind to one or more of the violations found in the current inspection consisting of at least one serious, willful, or repeated violation within the last three years;
  - e. An inspection that results in at least one failure-to-abate penalty notice where the underlying violation was classified as serious;
  - f. Any egregious case.
- b. In such cases, the instructions outlined in [CPL 02-00-145](#), *Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP)*, dated January 1, 2008, shall be followed to ensure that the proper measures are taken regarding classification, coding and treatment of the case.

3. **Significant Enforcement Cases.**

- a. Significant enforcement cases are defined as inspection cases with initial proposed penalties over \$100,000. An inspection resulting from an employee fatality or a workplace catastrophe may well be a significant enforcement case and, therefore, particularly thorough documentation is necessary to sustain legal sufficiency.
- b. In cases involving a fatality or catastrophe, the procedures outlined in the [memorandum](#) dated March 24, 2004, to Regional Administrators from Deputy Assistant Secretary R. Davis Layne regarding Procedures for Significant Enforcement Cases should be closely followed.

4. **Special Emphasis Programs.**

If a fatality or catastrophe investigation arises with respect to an establishment that is also in the current inspection cycle to receive a programmed inspection under any Site Specific Targeting program, the investigation and the inspection may be conducted either concurrently or separately.

5. **Cooperative Programs.**

If a fatality or catastrophe occurs at a Voluntary Protection Program (VPP), OSHA Strategic Partnership Program (OSPP) site, or OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP), the Regional VPP Manager, OSPP Coordinator, or Consultation Project Manager, as well as the Director of the Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs, should be notified. When enforcement activity has concluded, the Regional VPP Manager, OSPP Coordinator, or Consultation Project Manager should be informed so that the site can be reviewed for program issues.

N. **Special Issues Related to Workplace Fatalities.**

1. **Death by Natural Causes.**

Workplace fatalities caused by natural causes, including heart attacks, must be reported by the employer. The Area Director will then decide whether to investigate the incident.

2. **Workplace Violence.**

As with heart attacks, fatalities caused by incidents of workplace violence must be reported to OSHA by the employer. The Area Director or designee will determine whether or not the incident will be investigated.

3. **Motor Vehicle Accidents.**

- a. OSHA does not require reporting motor vehicle accidents that occur on public roads or highways, unless the accident occurs in a construction work zone.
- b. Although employers who are required to keep records must record vehicle accidents in their OSHA-300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, OSHA does not investigate such accidents. See [§1904.39\(b\)\(3\)](#).

**III. Rescue Operations and Emergency Response.**

A. **OSHA's Authority to Direct Rescue Operations.**

1. **Direction of Rescue Operations.**

OSHA has no authority to direct rescue operations. These are the responsibility of the employer and/or local political subdivisions or state agencies.

2. **Monitoring and Inspecting Working Conditions of Rescue Operations.**

OSHA may monitor and inspect working conditions of covered employees engaged in rescue operations to ensure compliance with standards that protect rescuers, and to provide technical assistance where appropriate.

B. **Voluntary Rescue Operations Performed by Employees.**

OSHA recognizes that an employee may choose to place himself/herself at risk to save the life of another person. The following provides guidance on OSHA citation policy toward employers whose employees perform, or attempt to perform, rescues of individuals in life-threatening danger.

1. **Imminent Danger.**

[Section 1903.14\(f\)](#) provides that no citation may be issued to an employer because of a rescue activity undertaken by an employee

of that employer with respect to an individual in imminent danger [i.e., the existence of any condition or practice that could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm before such condition or practice can be abated] unless:

- a. Such employee is designated or assigned by the employer to have responsibility to perform or assist in rescue operations,

AND

the employer fails to provide protection of the safety and health of such employee, including failing to provide appropriate training and rescue equipment; or

- b. Such employee is directed by the employer to perform rescue activities in the course of carrying out the employee's job duties,

AND

the employer fails to provide protection of the safety and health of such employee, including failing to provide appropriate training and rescue equipment; or

- c. Such employee is employed in a workplace that requires the employee to carry out duties that are directly related to a workplace operation where the likelihood of life-threatening accidents is foreseeable, such as operations where employees are located in confined spaces or trenches, handle hazardous waste, respond to emergency situations, perform excavations, or perform construction over water;

AND

such employee has not been designated or assigned to perform or assist in rescue operations and voluntarily elects to rescue such an individual;

AND

the employer has failed to instruct employees not designated or assigned to perform or assist in rescue operations of the arrangements for rescue, not to attempt rescue, and of the hazards of attempting rescue without adequate training or equipment.



2. **Citation for Voluntary Actions.**

If an employer has trained his or her employees in accordance with [§1903.14](#), no citation will be issued for an employee's voluntary rescue actions, regardless of whether they are successful.

C. **Emergency Response.**

1. **Role in Emergency Operations.**

While it is OSHA's policy to respond as quickly as possible to significant events that may affect the health or safety of employees, the agency does not have authority to direct emergency operations.

2. **Response to Catastrophic Events (Note: these are *not* OSH Act requirements).**

OSHA responds to catastrophic events promptly and acts as an active and forceful protector of employee safety and health during the response, cleanup, removal, storage, and investigation phases of these incidents, while maintaining a visible but limited role during the initial response phase.

3. **OSHA's Role.**

- a. For inspections of an ongoing emergency response or post-emergency response operation where there has been a catastrophic event, or where OSHA is acting under the National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP), Regional Administrators will determine the overall role that OSHA will play. See [CPL 02-02-073](#), *Inspection Procedures for 29 CFR 1910.120 and 1926.65, Paragraph (q): Emergency Response to Hazardous Substance Releases*, dated August 27, 2007.
- b. During an event that is covered by the NEMP, OSHA has a responsibility and authority to both enforce its regulations and provide technical advice and assistance to the Federal on-scene coordinator. If such an event occurs in a State Plan State, OSHA will coordinate with the State Plan agency to ensure their involvement in the response.
- c. For details on OSHA's response to occupationally-related incidents involving multiple fatalities, extensive injuries, massive toxic exposures, extensive property damage, or potential employee injury that generates widespread media interest. See [CPL 02-00-094](#), *OSHA's Response to Significant*

*Events of Potentially Catastrophic Consequences*, dated July 22, 1991.

4. **Incidents of National Significance.**

For detailed procedures on how to proceed during incidents of national significance when OSHA has been designated as the primary Federal agency for the coordination of technical assistance and consultation for emergency response and recovery worker health and safety, and the Assistant Secretary has activated the National Emergency Response Plan, see [HSO 01-00-001](#) *National Emergency Management Plan*, dated December 18, 2003, and the [National Response Framework \(Worker Safety and Health Support Annex\)](#).

*Note: These documents apply when activated.*

## CHAPTER 12

### SPECIALIZED INSPECTION PROCEDURES

#### I. Multi-Employer Workplace/Worksite [Reserved].

See [CPL 02-00-124](#), *Multi-Employer Citation Policy*, dated December 10, 1999.

#### II. Temporary Labor Camps.

##### A. Introduction.

[29 CFR 1910.142](#), the Temporary Labor Camp standard, is applicable to both agricultural and non-agricultural workplaces.

##### B. Definitions.

*NOTE: [Section 1910.142](#) does not contain a definition section. The following definitions reflect OSHA's interpretation of the standard.*

##### 1. Temporary.

The term *temporary* in [§1910.142](#) refers to employees who enter into an employment relationship for a discrete or defined time period. As a result, the term *temporary* refers to the length of employment, and not to the physical structures housing employees.

##### 2. Temporary Labor Camp Housing.

Temporary labor camp housing is required employer-provided housing that, due to company policy or practice, necessarily renders such housing a term or condition of employment. See *Frank Diehl Farms v. Secretary of Labor*, 696 F.2d 1325 (11<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1983).

##### 3. New Construction.

All agriculture housing construction started on or after April 3, 1980, including totally new structures and additions to existing structures, will be considered new construction. Cosmetic remodeling work on pre-1980 structures will not be considered new construction and should be treated as existing housing.

C. **Wage & Hour/OSHA Shared Authority Under Secretary's Order.**

Pursuant to a Secretary's Order, the Wage & Hour Division (WHD) of the Employment Standards Administration (ESA) has shared authority with OSHA over the Temporary Labor Camp standard ([§1910.142](#)). See Delegation of Authorities and Assignment of Responsibilities to the Assistant Secretary for Employment Standards and Other Officials in the Employment Standards Administration (*Federal Register*, January 2, 1997 ([62 FR 107](#))) and Secretary's Order 5-2002: Delegation of Authority and Assignment of Responsibility to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, *Federal Register*, October 22, 2002 ([67 FR 65007](#)).

1. **Enforcement Authority.**

a. **WHD Responsibility.**

WHD has enforcement authority with respect to any agricultural establishment where employees are engaged in "agricultural employment" within the meaning of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act, [29 U.S.C. 1802\(3\)](#), regardless of the number of employees, including employees engaged in hand packing of produce into containers, whether done on the ground, on a moving machine, or in a temporary packing shed. See Appendix A, Paragraph 4.a.2. of [ADM 01-00-003](#), *Redelegation of Authority and Responsibility of the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health*, dated March 6, 2003.

b. **OSHA Responsibility.**

OSHA retains enforcement authority over temporary labor camps for egg, poultry, red meat production, post-harvesting processing of agricultural and horticultural commodities, and any non-agricultural TLCs. See Appendix A, Paragraph 4.a.2.b. of, [ADM 01-00-003](#), *Redelegation of Authority and Responsibility of the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health*, dated March 6, 2003.

2. **Compliance Interpretation Authority.**

WHD has sole interpretation authority for the Temporary Labor Camp standard, even over those temporary labor camp areas for which OSHA has enforcement authority.

3. **Standard Revision and Variance Authority.**

OSHA retains all authority for revisions of the Temporary Labor Camp standard, as well as the evaluation and granting of temporary and permanent variances.

4. **State Plan States.**

- a. Eight of the twenty-two jurisdictions (21 states and Puerto Rico) that have OSHA-approved state plans covering private sector employment elected not to enforce the Temporary Labor Camp standards, except with respect to egg, poultry, red meat production, post-harvesting processing of agricultural and horticultural commodities, and any non-agricultural TLCs. Thus, WHD enforces these standards, except as noted above, in the following states: Alaska, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming.
- b. The 14 other jurisdictions with OSHA-approved state plans covering private sector employment have retained enforcement authority for the Temporary Labor Camp standards in agriculture. They are Arizona, California, Hawaii, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia and Washington.

D. **Enforcement of Temporary Labor Camp Standards for Agriculture.**

1. **Choice of Standards on Construction Prior to April 3, 1980.**

Prior to walkaround inspections of temporary labor camps built before April 3, 1980, employers providing the housing will be asked to specify their preference of applicable departmental standards. Choices shall be limited to Subpart E of [29 CFR Part 654](#), or [§1910.142](#), or provisions contained in variances from these standards. If an employer has been issued a variance, it shall produce copies upon request. See Housing for Agricultural Employees, [29 CFR 500.132](#).

- a. In instances where [Subpart E of Part 654](#) is specified as the governing standard for existing housing, hazardous conditions violating both the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and OSHA requirements shall be cited under the OSHA standard. Hazardous conditions found in violation of ETA standards, but in compliance with [§1910.142](#) shall not be cited.
- b. In instances where conditions are deemed in violation of the ETA standard and not covered by the OSHA standard, either

[Section 5\(a\)\(1\)](#) shall be cited (only serious violations) or such deficiencies shall be brought to the employer's attention and correction shall be encouraged.

- c. In instances where [§1910.142](#) is selected by the employer as the governing standard for the existing facility or is applicable in the case of "new construction," all requirements of that standard shall apply and shall be cited when violations are found.
- d. Under no circumstances shall [Subpart E of Part 654](#) be cited by CSHOs, since no authority exists within the Act to cite standards not adopted under the Act.

2. **Informing Employers.**

Prior to the inspection of an agriculture housing facility, employers shall be made aware of the foregoing policy and procedures during the opening conference. This policy applies to all employment-related agriculture housing covered by OSHA, regardless of whether or not employees housed in the facility are recruited through the U.S. Employment Service's inter-intrastate clearance system.

3. **Agriculture Worksites Under OSHA Responsibility.**

For agriculture worksites that OSHA has responsibility for, [§1928.21](#) lists which Part 1910 standards apply.

E. **OSHA Enforcement for Non-Agriculture Worksites.**

- 1. For non-agriculture worksites other Part 1910 standards may be cited for hazards which are not covered under [§1910.142](#). For non-agriculture worksites, the TLC standard has no provisions that specifically apply to fire protection, so those standards are not explicitly pre-empted by the TLC standard. The same is true for [§§1910.36](#) and [37](#) (exit routes). However, [§1910.38](#) (emergency action plans) applies only where an emergency action plan is required by a particular OSHA standard, so it cannot be used with TLCs.
- 2. Examples of temporary labor camp housing for non-agriculture worksites would be for the construction industry and garment industry in the Pacific territories. Such housing for these industries may also be found in large cities and rural areas in various parts of the United States.

3. The choice of standards issue, discussed in [Paragraph D.1., \*Choice of Standards on Construction Prior to April 3, 1980\*](#), does not apply to non-agriculture temporary housing.

**F. Employee Occupied Housing.**

Generally, inspections shall be conducted when housing facilities are occupied and as soon as feasible so that any hazards identified may be corrected early in the work season.

1. Since employees may not speak English, or may only speak English as a second language, every effort shall be made to send a bilingual CSHO on the inspection or have a bi-lingual person accompany the CSHO to translate conversations with employees.
2. CSHOs shall conduct inspections in a way that minimizes disruptions to those living in the housing facilities. If an occupant of a dwelling unit refuses entry for inspection purposes, CSHOs shall not insist on entry and shall continue the rest of the inspection unless the lack of access to the dwelling unit involved would substantially reduce the effectiveness of the inspection. In that case, valid consent should be obtained from the owner of the unit. If the owner also refuses entry, the procedures for refusal of entry shall be followed. See [Chapter 15, \*Legal Issues\*](#). The same shall apply in cases where employers refuse entry to the housing facility and/or to the entire worksite.
3. During inspections, CSHOs shall encourage employers to correct hazards as quickly as possible. Particular attention shall be paid to identifying instances of failure to abate and repeated violations from season to season or past occupancy. These violations shall be cited in accordance with normal procedures.

**G. Primary Concerns.**

When conducting a housing inspection, CSHOs shall be primarily concerned with those facilities or conditions that most directly relate to employee safety and health. Accordingly, all housing inspections shall address at least the following:

1. **Site.**
  - a. Review the location of the site for adequate drainage in relation to periodic flooding, swamps, pools, sinkholes, and other

surfaces where water may collect and remain for extended periods.

- b. Determine whether the site is adequate in size to prevent overcrowding and whether it is located near (within 500 feet of) livestock.
- c. Evaluate the site for cleanliness and sanitation; i.e., free from rubbish, debris, wastepaper, garbage, and other refuse.

2. **Shelter.**

- a. Determine whether the shelter provides protection against the elements; has the proper floor elevation and floor space; whether rooms are used for combined purposes of sleeping, cooking and eating; and whether all rooms have proper ventilation and screening.
- b. Determine which rooms are used for sleeping purposes, the number of occupants, size of the rooms, and whether beds, cots, or bunks and lockers are provided.
- c. Determine what kind of cooking arrangements or facilities are provided, and whether all heating, cooking and water heating equipment are installed in accordance with state and local codes.

3. **Water Supply.**

Determine whether the water supply for drinking, cooking, bathing and laundry is adequate and convenient, and has been approved by the appropriate local health authority.

4. **Toilet Facilities.**

Determine the type, number, location, lighting, and sanitary conditions of toilet facilities.

5. **Sewage Disposal.**

Determine, in camps where public sewers are available, whether all sewer lines and floor drains are connected.



6. **Laundry, Handwashing and Bathing Facilities.**

- a. Determine the number, kind, locations and conditions of these facilities, and whether there is an adequate supply of hot and cold running water.
- b. Determine also whether such facilities have appropriate floors, walls, partitions and drains.

7. **Lighting.**

- a. Determine whether electric service is available, and if so, if appropriate light levels, number of ceiling-type light fixtures, and separate floor- or wall-type convenience outlets are provided.
- b. Determine also whether the light fixtures, floor and wall outlets are properly grounded and covered.

8. **Refuse Disposal and Insect and Rodent Control.**

Determine the type, number, locations and conditions of refuse disposal containers, and whether there are any infestations of animal or insect vectors or pests.

9. **First-Aid Facilities.**

Determine whether adequate first-aid facilities are available and maintained for emergency treatment.

H. **Dimensions.**

The relevant dimensions and ratios specified in [§1910.142](#) are mandatory; however, CSHOs may exercise discretion to not cite minor variations from specific dimensions and ratios when such violations do not have an immediate or direct effect on safety and health. In those cases in which the standard itself does not make reference to specific dimensions or ratios but instead uses adequacy as the test for the cited conditions and facilities, the Area Director shall make the determination as to whether a violation exists on a case-by-case basis considering all relevant factors.

I. **Documentation for Housing Inspections.**

The following facts shall be carefully documented:

1. The age of the dwelling unit, including any additions. For recently built housing, date the construction was started.
2. Number of dwelling units, number of occupants in each unit.
3. Approximate size of area in which the housing is located and the distance between dwelling units and water supply, toilets, livestock and service building.

**J. Condition of Employment.**

The Act covers only housing that is a term and condition of employment. Factors in determining whether housing is a term and condition of employment include situations where:

1. Employers require employees to live in the housing.
2. The housing is in an isolated location or the lack of economically comparable alternative housing makes it a practical necessity to live there.
3. Additional factors to consider in determining whether the housing is a term and condition of employment include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Cost of the housing to the employee – is it provided free or at a low rent?
  - b. Ownership or control of the housing – is the housing owned or controlled or provided by the employer?
  - c. Distance to the worksite from the camp, distance to the worksite from other non-camp residences – is alternative housing reasonably accessible (distance, travel, cost, etc.) to the worksite?
  - d. Benefit to the employer -- does the employer make the camp available in order to ensure that the business is provided with an adequate supply of labor?
  - e. Relationship of the camp occupants to the employer – are those living in the camp required to work for the employer upon demand?

## **Chapter 13**

### **FEDERAL AGENCY SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAMS**

#### **I. Federal Agency Programs [Reserved]**

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## **Chapter 14**

### **HEALTH INSPECTION ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS**

#### **I. Health Enforcement Programs [Reserved]**

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## Chapter 15

### LEGAL ISSUES

#### I. Administrative Subpoenas.

##### A. When to Issue.

An Administrative Subpoena may be issued whenever there is a need for records, documents, testimony or other supporting evidence necessary for completing an inspection or an investigation of any matter falling within OSHA's authority.

1. Regional Administrators have authority to issue subpoenas, and are also authorized and encouraged to delegate to Area Directors the authority to issue routine administrative subpoenas.
2. The issuance of an administrative subpoena requires the Area Director's or Regional Administrator's signature.

##### B. Two Types of Subpoenas.

There are two types of subpoenas used to obtain evidence during an OSHA investigation:

1. A *Subpoena Duces Tecum* is used to obtain documents. It orders a person or organization to appear at a specified time and place and produce certain documents, and to testify to their authenticity. Employers are not required to create a new record in order to respond to these types of subpoenas.
2. A *Subpoena Ad Testificandum* commands a named individual or corporation to appear at a specified time and place, such as the Area Office, to provide testimony under oath. A verbatim transcript is made of this testimony.

##### C. Area Director Delegated Authority to Issue Administrative Subpoenas.

Although authority to issue some types of subpoenas is reserved to the Regional Administrator, Area Directors may be authorized to issue routine administrative subpoenas.

1. Area Directors may be delegated authority to issue administrative subpoenas for any record or document relevant to an inspection or investigation under the Act, including:

- a. Injury and illness records such as the OSHA-301 and the OSHA-300 See [CPL 02-02-072](#), *Rules of Agency Practice and Procedure Concerning OSHA Access to Employee Medical Records*, dated August 22, 2007, and [29 CFR 1913.10\(b\)\(6\)](#);
  - b. Hazard communication program;
  - c. Lockout/tagout program; and
  - d. Safety and health program.
2. Information shall be requested from the employer or holder of records, documents, or other information-containing materials.
    - a. If this person/entity refuses to provide requested information or evidence, the OSHA representative serving the subpoena shall explain the reason for the request.
    - b. If there is still a refusal to produce the information or evidence requested, the OSHA representative shall inform the person/entity that the agency may take further legal action.
  3. The official issuing the subpoena is responsible for evaluating the circumstances and deciding whether to issue a subpoena. In cases with potential national implications or involving extraordinary circumstances, the Regional Administrator shall be contacted for concurrence or to determine whether the subpoena should be issued by the Regional Administrator.

**D. Regional Administrator Authority to Issue Administrative Subpoenas.**

1. Regional Administrators have independent authority to issue subpoenas for any appropriate purpose. Unless delegated to an Area Director, the following authority shall be reserved to Regional Administrators:
  - a. Issuance of a [Subpoena Ad Testificandum](#) to require the testimony of any company official, employee, or other witness;
  - b. Issuance of a subpoena for the production of personally identifiable medical records for which a medical access order has been obtained See [CPL 02-02-072](#), *Rules of Agency Practice and Procedure Concerning OSHA Access to Employee Medical Records*, dated August 22, 2007, and [§1913.10\(b\)\(6\)](#); and
  - c. Issuance of a subpoena for the production of physical evidence, such as samples of materials.



2. Although this authority may not routinely be delegated to Area Directors, in a few cases such delegation may be appropriate.

**E. Administrative Subpoena Content and Service.**

1. Model administrative subpoenas for use by the Area Offices are provided at the end of this chapter. If the Area Director believes that there is reason for any departure from the models due to circumstances of the case, the RSOL shall be consulted.
2. The subpoena shall be prepared for the appropriate party and will normally be served by personal service (delivery to the party named in person). Leaving a copy at a place of business or residence is not personal service.
  - a. In exceptional circumstances, service may be by certified mail with return receipt requested.
  - b. Where no individual's name is available, the subpoena can be addressed to a business' or organization's "Custodian(s) of Records."
3. Examples of language for a routine *Subpoena Duces Tecum* are provided below. This language should be expanded when requesting additional or more detailed information for accident, catastrophe, referral or fatality investigations.
  - a. "Copies of any and all documents, including information stored electronically, which reflect training procedures for the lockout/tagout procedures and hazard communication program in effect at the [insert site name] in [insert city, state], during the period [insert month/day/year], to present."
  - b. "Copies of the OSHA-300 and the OSHA-301 forms, for the entire site, during calendar years [insert year] and [insert year]."
  - c. "Copies of any and all documents, including information stored electronically, such as safety and health program handbooks, minutes of safety and health meetings, training certification records, audits and reprimands for violations of safety and health rules by employees of the [insert site name] in [insert city, state], that show [insert employer's name] had and enforced safety rules relating to the use of trench boxes during the period [insert month/day/year], to present."

*NOTE: Where particular information is being sought, a subpoena's description should be narrow and specific in order to increase the likelihood for prompt compliance with the request.*

4. A copy of the subpoena, signed by the Area Director, shall be forwarded as soon as possible to the Regional Administrator and shall also be maintained at the Area Office.
  - a. Copies of subpoenas may be forwarded to the RSOL as practicable.
  - b. Regional Administrators and Area Directors shall establish procedures to track all administrative subpoenas issued. These procedures shall include instructions for completing the [return of service](#).

**F. Compliance with the Subpoena.**

The person/entity served may comply with the subpoena by making the information or evidence available to the compliance officer immediately upon service, or at the time and place specified in the subpoena.

1. With respect to any record required to be made or kept pursuant to any statute or regulation, the subpoena shall normally allow **three days** from the date of service for production of the required information although a shorter period may be appropriate.
2. With respect to other types of records or information, such as safety programs or incident reports, the subpoena shall normally allow at least **five working days** from the date of service for production of the required information.
3. Separate subpoenas for items 1 and 2 above may be necessary.
4. Any witness fees or mileage costs potentially associated with administrative subpoenas should be discussed with the RSOL prior to the issuance.

**G. Refusal to Honor Subpoena.**

1. If the person/entity served refuses to comply with (or only partially honors) the subpoena, the compliance officer shall document all relevant facts and advise the Area Director before taking further action.
2. To enforce a subpoena, the Area Director shall follow the procedures outlined for [obtaining warrants](#), and shall refer the matter, through the Regional Administrator, to the RSOL for appropriate action.

## H. **Anticipatory Subpoena.**

Generally, agency policy is to seek voluntary production of evidence before an administrative subpoena is issued. However, a subpoena may be executed and served without making a prior request where there is reason to believe that the corporate entity and/or person from whom information is sought will not voluntarily comply, or where there is an urgent need for the information. Anticipatory subpoenas require consultation with RSOL.

*NOTE: For example, pre-inspection preparation of subpoenas for issuance at the opening conference is appropriate in cases where the employer has previously denied access to records or where complex inspections, involving extensive review of records, are planned.*

## II. **Service of Subpoena on OSHA Personnel.**

### A. **Proceedings to which the Secretary of Labor is a Party.**

If any, OSHA personnel is served with a subpoena or order either to appear or to provide testimony in, or information for, a proceeding where the Secretary of Labor is a party, they shall immediately contact the RSOL for instructions regarding the manner in which to respond. If a CSHO is served with a subpoena, they shall notify the Area Director immediately who shall then refer the matter to the RSOL.

*NOTE: Review Commission rules provide that any person served with a subpoena, whether to testify in any Commission hearing or to produce records and testify in such hearing shall, within **five days** after date of service, move to revoke the subpoena if the person does not intend to comply with its terms. See [§2200.57\(c\)](#). Therefore, expeditious handling of any subpoena served on OSHA employees is essential. When any such subpoena is served, the RSOL must immediately be notified by telephone or email.*

### B. **Proceedings to which the Secretary of Labor is Not a Party.**

1. If any OSHA personnel is served with a subpoena or order either to appear or to provide testimony in, or information for, a proceeding to which the Secretary of Labor is not a party (e.g., a private third party tort suit for damages associated with a workplace injury), they shall immediately contact the RSOL.

2. U.S. Department of Labor regulations prohibit Department employees from participating in, or from providing information for, proceedings in which the Secretary of Labor is not a party without explicit permission from the designated Deputy Solicitor of Labor. See [29 CFR 2.21](#) and [29 CFR 2.22](#). These regulations apply to demands to disclose or provide:
  - a. Any material contained in the files of the Department;
  - b. Any information relating to material contained in the files of the Department; or
  - c. Any information or material acquired by any person while such person was an employee of the Department as a part of the performance of his/her official duties or because of his/her official status.
3. The Office of the Solicitor is responsible for responding to such requests and will take appropriate steps to have the subpoena quashed or provide the necessary permission, as appropriate, to allow an employee to comply with an issued order.

### **III. Obtaining Warrants.**

#### **A. Warrant Applications.**

1. Upon refusal of entry, or if there is reason to believe an employer will refuse entry, the Area Director shall proceed according to guidelines and procedures established in the region for warrant applications. The Area Director may initiate the compulsory process with approval of the RSOL.
2. Warrant applications for establishments where consent has been denied for a limited scope inspection (i.e., complaint, referral, accident investigation) shall normally be limited to the specific working conditions or practices forming the basis of the inspection. However, a broad scope warrant may be sought if there is evidence of potentially pervasive violative conditions or if the establishment is on a current list of establishments targeted for a comprehensive inspection.

#### **B. General Information Necessary to Obtain a Warrant.**

If the warrant is to be obtained by the RSOL, the Area Director shall inform the RSOL in writing within **48 hours** after the determination is made and provide all information necessary to obtain a warrant, including:

1. Area/District Office, telephone number, and name of Area Director or designee involved;

2. Name of CSHO attempting inspection and inspection number, if assigned. Identify whether the inspection to be conducted will include safety items, health items or both;
3. Legal name(s) of establishment and address, including City, State and County. Include site location if different from mailing address;
4. Estimated number of employees at inspection site;
5. Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) or North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) Code and high hazard ranking for that specific industry within the State, as obtained from statistics provided by the National Office;
6. Summary of all facts leading to the refusal of entry or limitation of inspection, including:
  - a. Date and time of entry/attempted entry;
  - b. Date and time of denial;
  - c. Stage of denial (entry, opening conference, walkaround, etc.);
7. A narrative of all actions taken by the CSHO leading up to, during, and after refusal, including:
  - a. Full name and title of the person(s) to whom CSHO presented credentials;
  - b. Full name and title of person(s) who refused entry;
  - c. Reasons stated for the denial by person(s) refusing entry;
  - d. Response, if any, by CSHO to the denial name and address (if known) of any witnesses to denial of entry.
8. Any information related to past inspections, including copies of previous citations.
9. Any previous requests for warrants. Attach details, if applicable.
10. All completed information related to the current inspection report, including documentation of any observations of violations in plain view discovered prior to denial.

11. If a construction site involving work under contract from any agency of the Federal Government, the name of the agency, the date of the contract, and the type of work involved.
12. Other pertinent information, such as: description of the workplace; the work processes; machinery, tools and materials used; known hazards and injuries associated with the specific manufacturing process or industry.
13. Investigative procedures that may be required during the proposed inspection, e.g., interviewing of employees/witnesses, personal sampling, photographs, audio/videotapes, examination of records, access to medical records, etc.

C. **Specific Warrant Information Based on Inspection Type.**

Document all specific reasons for the selection of the establishment to be inspected, including proposed scope of the inspection:

1. **Imminent Danger.**
  - a. Description of alleged imminent danger situation;
  - b. Date information received and source of information;
  - c. Original allegation and copy of typed report, including basis for reasonable expectation of death or serious physical harm and immediacy of danger; and
  - d. Whether all current imminent danger investigative procedures have been followed.

2. **Fatality/Catastrophe.**

The OSHA-36 Form should be completed with as much detail as possible.

3. **Complaint or Referral.**

- a. Original complaint or referral and copy of typed complaint or referral;
- b. Reasons OSHA believes that a violation threatening physical harm or imminent danger exists, including possible standards that could be violated if the complaint or referral is credible and representative of workplace conditions;
- c. Whether all current complaint or referral processing procedures have been followed; and

- d. Any additional information pertaining to the evaluation of the complaint or referral.

4. **Programmed.**

- a. Targeted safety – general industry, maritime, construction;
- b. Targeted health; and/or
- c. Special emphasis program--Special Programs, Local Emphasis Program, Migrant Housing Inspection, etc.

5. **Follow-up.**

- a. Date of initial inspection;
- b. Details and reasons follow-up was conducted;
- c. Copies of previous citations which served as the basis for initiating the follow-up;
- d. Copies of settlement agreements and final orders, if applicable; and/or
- e. Previous history of failure to correct, if any.

6. **Monitoring.**

- a. Date of original inspection;
- b. Details and reasons monitoring inspection is to be conducted;
- c. Copies of previous citations and/or settlement agreements that serve as the basis for the monitoring inspection; and/or
- d. Petition for Modification of Abatement Date (PMA) request, if applicable.

D. **Warrant Procedures.**

Where a warrant has been obtained, CSHOs are authorized to conduct the inspection in accordance with the terms of the warrant. All questions from employers concerning the reasonableness of a compulsory process inspection shall be referred to the Area Director and the RSOL.

1. **Action Taken Upon Receipt of Warrant (Compulsory Process).**

- a. The inspection will normally begin within 24 hours of receipt of a warrant or from the date authorized by the warrant for initiating the inspection.
- b. Upon completion of the inspection, if the warrant includes a return of service space for entering inspection dates, CSHOs shall complete the return of service on the original warrant, sign and forward it to the Area Director or designee for appropriate action.

2. **Serving a Subpoena for Production of Records.**

Where appropriate, even where the scope of an inspection is limited by a warrant or an employer's consent to specific conditions or practices, any subpoena for production of records shall be served in accordance with the section on administrative subpoenas in this chapter.

E. **Second Warrant.**

Under certain circumstances, a second warrant may be sought to expand an inspection based on a records review or "plain view" observations of other potential violations discovered during a limited scope walkaround.

F. **Refused Entry or Interference.**

1. When an apparent refusal to permit entry or inspection is encountered upon presenting the warrant, CSHOs shall specifically inquire whether the employer is refusing to comply with the warrant.
2. If the employer refuses to comply or if consent is not clearly given, CSHOs shall not attempt to conduct the inspection at that time, and shall leave the premises and contact the Area Director or designee regarding further action.
  - a. CSHOs shall fully document all facts relevant to the refusal (including noting all witnesses to the denial of entry or interference).
  - b. Area Directors shall then contact the RSOL and the Regional Administrator, who shall jointly decide the action to be taken.

G. **Federal Marshal Assistance.**

In unusual circumstances, a U.S. Marshal may be asked to accompany a CSHO when a warrant is presented. A request for a U.S. Marshal's assistance shall be made only by an Area Director after consultation with the Regional Administrator



and the RSOL, and only when there is a potential for violence, harassment and/or interference with the inspection, or reason to believe that the presence of a U.S. Marshall will assist with compliance with the warrant.

#### **IV. Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA).**

##### **A. Prevailing Party May be Awarded Fees.**

[The Equal Access to Justice Act \(EAJA\)](#) provides that a party prevailing against the United States in litigation may be awarded fees payable by an agency of the United States if the agency's position in litigation was not "substantially justified" or if the agency proposed a penalty that was reduced as a result of litigation and subsequently determined to be "unreasonable." EAJA awards are statutorily limited to certain small entity parties, generally those with a designated net worth and/or number of employees. See [28 U.S.C. § 2412\(d\)\(2\)\(B\)](#).

##### **B. OSHA's Position Must be Substantially Justified.**

Pursuant to the [EAJA](#), the Commission or a federal court may award an employer fees if OSHA proceeds in litigation on a position that is not substantially justified or proposes a penalty that subsequently is found to be unreasonable in light of the statutory penalty assessment provisions and the circumstances relevant to the particular case. If an EAJA award is assessed by the Commission or a court following an OSHA proceeding and the award becomes a final order, OSHA is responsible for paying the award.

##### **C. EAJA Should Not Affect How the Agency Operates.**

[EAJA](#) should not affect the manner in which the agency operates, as citations are issued only after OSHA determines that there is adequate evidence that a violation exists, and proposed penalty amounts are determined based on established statutory and administrative criteria, and facts derived during the inspection/investigation. However, the potential for incurring EAJA costs underscores the importance of thoroughly documenting each element of a violation with evidence supporting the violative condition and characterization. In addition, because the Secretary generally bears the burden of proof in litigation, it is important that CSHOs promptly discuss with the RSOL during the early stages of an investigation any factors affecting the Secretary's ability to support an alleged violation or penalty proposal (e.g., the likely unavailability of a critical witness or the need for an expert).

#### **V. Notice of Contest.**

OSHRC is an independent Federal agency created to decide contests of citations or penalties resulting from OSHA inspections. The Review Commission, therefore, functions as an administrative court, with established procedures for conducting hearings,

receiving evidence and rendering decisions by its Administrative Law Judges (ALJs). The Act states that the Review Commission operate as an independent agency (i.e., not part of another Federal department) to ensure that parties to agency cases receive impartial hearings.

**A. Time Limit for Filing a Notice of Contest.**

1. The Act provides employers fifteen working days following its receipt of a notice of a citation to notify OSHA of the employer's desire to contest a citation and/or proposed assessment of penalty.
2. Where a notice of contest was not mailed, i.e., postmarked, within the 15 working day period allowed for contest, the Area Director shall follow the instructions for Late Notices of Contest. A copy of any untimely notice of contest shall be retained in the case file.

**B. Contest of Abatement Period Only.**

If the notice of contest is submitted to the Area Director after the 15 working day period, but contests only the reasonableness of the abatement period, it shall be treated as a Petition for Modification of Abatement and handled in accordance with PMA procedures.

**C. Communication Where the Intent to Contest is Unclear.**

1. If a written communication is received from an employer containing an objection, criticism or other adverse comment as to a citation or proposed penalty, but which does not clearly appear to contest the citations, the Area Director shall contact the employer to clarify the intent of the communication.
  - a. After receipt of the communication, any clarification should be obtained within the 15 working day contest period, so that if a determination is made that it is a notice of contest, the file may be timely forwarded to the Review Commission.
  - b. In cases where the Area Office receives a written communication from an employer requesting **an informal conference that also states an intent to contest**, the employer must be informed that there can be no informal conference unless the notice of contest is withdrawn. If the employer still wants to pursue an informal conference, it must first present or send a letter expressing that intent and rescinding the contest. All documents pertaining to such communications shall be retained in the case file.

2. If an Area Director determines that the employer intends the document to be a notice of contest, it shall be transmitted to the OSHRC. If contact with the employer reveals a desire for an informal conference, the employer shall be informed that the conference does not stay the running of the 15 working day contest period.

*NOTE: Settlement is permitted at any stage of Commission proceedings. See [§2200.100\(a\)](#).*

## **VI. Late Notice of Contest.**

### **A. Failure to Notify OSHA of Intent to Contest.**

If the employer fails to notify OSHA of its intent to contest a citation or penalty within fifteen working days following the receipt of a citation, the citation and proposed penalties become final orders of the Review Commission.

### **B. Notice Received after the Contest Period.**

1. In every case where OSHA receives notice of an employer's intent to contest a citation and/or proposed assessment of penalty beyond the 15 working day period, Area Directors shall inform employers in writing that OSHA will not accept the untimely notice of contest, but that it may transmit the late filed notice of contest to the Commission.
2. **The letter from the Area Director will also indicate the following:**
  - a. Inspection number;
  - b. Citation number(s);
  - c. Corresponding proposed penalties;
  - d. Date on which OSHA believes the employer received the notice of a violation (and proposed penalty, if applicable);
  - e. Date on which OSHA received the employer's notice of contest, as well as any additional information the Area Director believes to be pertinent.

*NOTE: The postmarked envelope containing the late filed notice of contest date is to be retained. A copy of the letter and envelope shall be sent to RSOL.*

**C. Retention of Documents.**

1. Area Offices shall maintain all documents reflecting the date on which the employer received the notice of a violation (and proposed penalty, if applicable), and the employer's notice of contest was received, as well as any additional information pertinent to demonstrating failure to file a timely notice of contest.
2. Written or oral statements from the employer or its representative explaining the employer's reason for missing the filing deadline shall also be maintained (notes shall be taken to memorialize oral communications).

**VII. Contested Case Processing Procedures.**

The notice of contest and related documents must be sent to the OSHRC within 15 working days of receipt of the employer's notification. See [§2200.33](#). The RSOL shall be consulted in any questionable cases.

**A. Transmittal of Notice of Contest to Commission.**

**1. Documents to Executive Secretary.**

In most cases, the envelope sent to the OSHRC Executive Secretary will contain the following three documents:

- a. Employer's original letter contesting OSHA's action;
- b. One copy of the Citation and Notification of Penalty Form (OSHA-2) or of the Notice of Failure to Abate Form (OSHA-2B); and
- c. Certification form.

**2. Notices of Contest.**

The original notice of contest shall be transmitted to the Commission and a copy retained in the case file. The envelope containing the notice of contest shall be retained in the case file with the postmark intact.

**3. Contested Citations and Notice of Proposed Penalty or Notice of Failure to Abate.**

A signed copy of each of these documents shall be sent to the Commission and a copy retained in the case file.

4. **Certification Form.**

a. The certification form shall be used for all contested cases and a copy retained in the case file. It is essential that the original of the certification form, properly executed, be transmitted to the Commission.

- When listing the Region number in the heading, do not use Roman numerals. Use 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10. Insert "C" in the CSHO Job Title block if a safety CSHO or "I," if a health CSHO.
- Item 3 of the form shall be filled by inserting only the word "employer" or "employee" in the space provided. This shall be done even where the notice of contest is filed by an attorney for the party contesting the action. An item "4" shall be added where other documents, such as additional notices of contest, are sent to the Commission.
- Insert the correct date for each item in the document list in the column headed "Date."
- Insert the name and address of the RSOL attorney who will handle the case, in the box containing the printed words "FOR THE SECRETARY OF LABOR." The Commission notifies this person of the hearing date and other official actions on the case.

b. The documents are to be transmitted within the 15 working day time limit to:

Executive Secretary  
Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission  
1120 20<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Washington, DC 20036-3419

B. **Transmittal of File to Regional Solicitor.**

1. Under the Commission's Rules of Procedure, the Secretary of Labor is required to file a complaint with the Commission within **20 calendar days** after the Secretary's receipt of a notice of contest.
2. Immediately after receiving a notice of contest, the Area Director shall send to the RSOL by U.S. mail (or other mutually agreeable manner) the notice of contest, which the Area Director or designee will later transmit

to the Commission, along with the complete investigative file (including photos and video).

## **VIII. Communications while Proceedings are Pending before the Commission.**

### **A. Consultation with Regional Solicitor.**

1. After a notice of contest is filed and the case is within the jurisdiction of the Commission, there shall be no subsequent investigations of, or conferences with, the employer or employee representatives that have sought party status relating to any issues underlying the contested citations, without prior clearance from the RSOL.
2. Once a notice of contest has been filed, all inquiries relating to the Citation and Notification of Penalty shall be referred promptly to the RSOL. This includes inquiries from the employer, affected employees, employee representatives, prospective witnesses, insurance carriers, other Government agencies, attorneys, and any other party.

### **B. Communications with Commission Representatives while Proceedings are Pending before the Commission.**

CSHOs, Area Directors, Regional Administrators, or other field personnel shall not have any direct or indirect communication relevant to the merits of any open case with Administrative Law Judges, employees of the Commission, or any of the parties or interveners. All inquiries and communications shall be handled through the RSOL.

## **IX. Commission Procedures.**

### **A. Two Levels of Adjudication.**

OSHRC's Rules of Procedure provide for two levels of adjudication. The first level is before an Administrative Law Judge. The second level is review of ALJ decisions by the agency's Commissioners if one of the Commissioners directs review.

### **B. Rules of Procedure.**

1. The OSHRC Rules of Procedure are found in [Part 2200](#) of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. These rules govern two types of ALJ proceedings.
  - a. The more conventional proceeding involves the use of pleadings, discovery, a hearing and post-hearing briefs.

- b. Simplified Proceedings are less formal hearings that employ fewer legal procedures and are used in less complex cases (few citation items, no willful or repeat violation or fatality) and can be requested by either party or by the ALJ. In Simplified Proceedings, pleadings are generally not required and early discussion among the parties to narrow the disputed issues is required.

2. **Receipt of Case.**

Upon receipt of a case by the assigned ALJ, a hearing date is set and a site selected as close as possible to where the alleged violation(s) occurred. The hearing is an administrative trial conducted in accordance with the Commission's Rules of Procedure.

3. **Hearing Evidence.**

- a. Review includes a new examination of all of the evidence, as well as briefs submitted by the parties.
- b. Upon hearing all of the evidence, the judge will issue a written decision, including both findings of fact and conclusions of law.
- c. The OSHRC then issues a decision affirming, modifying or vacating the citations and penalties proposed by OSHA.
- d. The decision becomes final in **30 days** unless, within that period, one of the Commissioners directs that the case be reviewed.

4. **Review of ALJ's Decision.**

If one of the parties requests review of the ALJ's decision, but review is not directed by the Commission, the petitioning party may request review by the appropriate U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Review by a Court of Appeals must be sought within **60 days** after the Commission's decision becomes final.

5. **Availability of Commission Decisions.**

Commission decisions, including Administrative Law Judge decisions, are available from the Review Commission website, [www.oshrc.gov](http://www.oshrc.gov).

**X. Discovery Methods.**

Once a legal proceeding has been initiated, each party has the opportunity to "discover" evidence in the possession of an opposing party. Traditionally, discovery methods include:

- ▶ Request for Admissions,
- ▶ Interrogatories,
- ▶ Requests for Production of Documents, and
- ▶ Depositions.

An attorney from the Solicitor's Office will represent the agency in responding to discovery requests. It is essential that all OSHA personnel coordinate and cooperate with the assigned attorney to ensure that such responses are accurate, complete, and filed in a timely manner.

**A. Interrogatories.**

CSHOs shall draft and sign answers to interrogatories, with RSOL assistance. It is the responsibility of the CSHO to answer each interrogatory separately and fully. The RSOL attorney shall sign any objections to the interrogatories. CSHOs should be aware that they may be deposed and/or examined at hearing on the interrogatory answers provided.

**B. Production of Documents.**

1. If a request for production of documents is served on RSOL and that request is forwarded to the Area Office CSHOs, or staff member, they should immediately make all documents relevant to that discovery demand available to the RSOL attorney.
2. While portions of those materials may be later withheld based on governmental privileges or doctrine (e.g., statements that would reveal the identity of an informer), CSHOs must not withhold any information from the RSOL attorney.
3. It is RSOL's responsibility to review all material and to assert any applicable privileges that may justify withholding documents/materials that would otherwise be discoverable.

**C. Depositions.**

Depositions permit an opposing party to take a potential witness' pre-hearing statement under oath in order to better understand the witness's potential testimony if the matter later proceeds to a hearing. CSHOs or other OSHA personnel may be required to offer testimony during a deposition. In such cases, an RSOL attorney will be present with the witness.



## **XI. Testifying in Hearings.**

While instructions provided by RSOL attorneys take precedence, particularly during trial preparation, the following considerations will generally enhance the hearing testimony of CSHOs:

### **A. Review Documents and Evidence.**

In consultation with RSOL, CSHOs should review documents and evidence relevant to the inspection or investigation before the proceeding so that when testifying, they are very familiar with the evidence and need not regularly refer to the file or other documents.

### **B. Attire.**

Wear appropriate clothing that reflects the agency's respect for the court or other tribunal before which you are testifying. This also applies when appearing before a magistrate to seek an administrative warrant.

### **C. Responses to Questions.**

Answer all questions directly and honestly. If you do not understand a question, indicate that and ask that the question be repeated or clarified.

### **D. Judge's Instruction(s).**

Listen carefully to any instruction provided by the judge and, unless instructed to the contrary by RSOL counsel, follow the judge's instruction.

## **XII. Commission Simplified Proceedings.**

Simplified Proceedings (formerly known as "E-Z Trials") are the Commission's attempt to simplify the resolution of some contested citations.

### **A. Proposed Penalty Threshold.**

Because the Commission has raised the proposed penalty threshold for cases that are eligible for simplified proceedings, a greater number of cases will be eligible for this type of proceeding. These include most cases with aggregate proposed penalties of less than \$20,000 and, at the discretion of the Chief ALJ, some cases with aggregate proposed penalties of up to \$30,000.

### **B. Prompt Disclosure of Inspection Documents.**

Simplified proceedings contemplate the prompt disclosure of inspection documents. Pursuant to the Commission's rules [[29 CFR 2200.206](#)], the Secretary

must provide the employer within prescribed time periods, the following documents:

1. Within **12 working days** after the case is designated for simplified proceedings, copies of the OSHA-1A and -1B forms (or their equivalents);
2. Within **30 calendar days** after the case is designated for simplified proceedings, copies of photographs or videotapes expected to be used at the hearing; and
3. Within **30 calendar days** after the case is designated for simplified proceedings, any evidence in OSHA's possession that may support the employer's defense to the citation.

*NOTE: Simplified proceedings provide fewer opportunities for the Secretary's counsel to obtain information concerning the employer's positions and defenses prior to a hearing. Therefore, it is particularly important for CSHOs to promptly provide SOL counsel with all information regarding potential affirmative defenses that an employer may raise and/or arguments the employer may use to refute a violation(s) or the propriety of a proposed penalty.*

### **XIII. Citation Final Order Dates.**

#### **A. Citation/Notice of Penalty Not Contested.**

The Citation/Notice of Penalty and abatement date becomes a final order of the Commission **on the date the 15 working day contest period expires**. For purposes of computing the 15 working day period, the day the employer receives the citation is not counted.

**Example 15-1:** An employer receives the Citation/Notice of Penalty on Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>. The day the employer receives the Citation/Notice of Penalty is not counted. Therefore, the final order date would be Monday, August 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### **B. Citation/Notice of Penalty Resolved by Informal Settlement Agreement (ISA).**

Because there is no contest of the citation, an ISA becomes final, with penalties due and payable, **on the date of the last signature of the parties**. See also [Chapter 8, Paragraph I.B.2](#). (An ISA is effective upon signature by both the Area Director and the employer representative as long as the contest period has not expired).

*NOTE: A later due date for payment of penalties may be set by the terms of the ISA.*

C. **Citation/Notice of Penalty Resolved by Formal Settlement Agreement (FSA).**

The Citation/Notice of Penalty becomes **final 30 days after docketing of the Administrative Law Judge's (ALJ's) Order approving the parties' stipulation and settlement agreement**, assuming there is no direction for review. The Commission's Notice of Docketing specifies the date upon which the decision becomes a final order. If the FSA is approved by an order of the full Commission, **it will become final after 60 days.**

D. **Cases Resolved by an ALJ Decision.**

The ALJ's decision becomes a **final order of the Commission 30 days after docketing, unless the Commission directs review of the case.** The Commission's Notice of Docketing specifies the date upon which the decision becomes a final order.

E. **ALJ Decision Reviewed by Commission.**

Pursuant to [Section 11](#) of the Act, **the Commission's decision becomes final 60 days after the Notice of Commission Decision.** The Notice of Commission Decision specifies the date the Commission decision was issued. As a matter of policy, OSHA does not attempt to collect civil penalties while a case is being appealed. However, unless the employer requests a "stay" of the Commission's decision, court of appeals review does not delay the abatement obligation.

F. **Commission Decision Review by the U.S. Court of Appeals.**

The U.S. Court of Appeals' decision becomes final when the court issues its mandate.

**XIV. Federal Court Enforcement under Section 11(b) of the OSH Act.**

An employer's obligation to abate a cited violation arises when there is a final order of the Review Commission upholding the citation.

A. **Section 11(b) Summary Enforcement Orders.**

[Section 11\(b\)](#) of the OSH Act authorizes OSHA to obtain a summary enforcement order from the appropriate Circuit Court of Appeals enforcing final Review Commission orders. An employer who violates such a court order can be found in contempt of court. Potential sanctions for contempt include daily penalties and other fines, recovery of the Secretary's costs of bringing the action, incarceration of an individual company officer who flouts the Court's order, and any other sanction which the court deems necessary to secure compliance. Employers who ignore ordinary enforcement actions may be induced to comply by the severity of these potential contempt sanctions.

[Section 11\(b\)](#) orders can be an effective and speedier alternative to failure-to-abate notices that are typically issued when an employer does not abate a violation within the allowed time. They can be requested from the Court whether the final order results from a Review Commission or ALJ decision, a settlement agreement, or an uncontested citation.

**B. Selection of Cases for Section 11(b) Action.**

All final orders issued in enhanced enforcement cases must be considered for [Section 11\(b\)](#) enforcement. In addition, a petition for 11(b) enforcement is to be considered in cases where final orders do not meet the enhanced enforcement case criteria but where the following factors suggest that an 11(b) petition should be filed:

1. Employer's citation history and/or other indications suggest serious compliance problems, such as widespread violations of the same or similar standards at multiple establishments or construction worksites. The OSHA IMIS database should be searched for the employer's history of violations;
2. Employer statements or actions indicating reluctance or refusal to abate significant hazards, or behavior that demonstrates indifference to employee safety;
3. Repeated violations of the Act, particularly of the same standard, which continue undeterred by the traditional remedies of civil monetary penalties and Review Commission orders to abate;
4. Repeated refusal to pay penalties;
5. Filing false or inadequate abatement verification reports;
6. Disregard of a previous settlement agreement, particularly one that includes a specific or company-wide abatement plan.

**C. Drafting of Citations and Settlements to Facilitate Section 11(b) Enforcement.**

Proper drafting of citations and settlement agreements can facilitate obtaining a [Section 11\(b\)](#) order and maximize its deterrent effect.

Notations stating "Corrected during inspection" or "Employer has abated all hazards" shall not be made on the citation in cases where there is evidence of a continuing violative practice by an employer that may be subject to a summary enforcement order under [Section 11\(b\)](#) of the Act (i.e., failure to provide fall protection is a recurring condition based on citation history or other indications

suggesting widespread violations of the same or similar standards at other establishments or construction worksites).

Where possible, OSHA should attempt to identify cases that may warrant [Section 11\(b\)](#) enforcement at least a month before issuing the citation. When OSHA identifies such a case, it will contact the RSOL to discuss citation language that is in accord with Section 11(b) enforcement. If a case identified for potential 11(b) action is being resolved through a settlement agreement, whether formal or informal, language should be sought in the agreement that commits the employer to specific ongoing abatement duties.

Language in a settlement agreement that imposes a specific duty on the employer, such as a requirement that the employer hire a consultant to develop a safety program or provide OSHA with a list of other worksites, can be enforced under [Section 11\(b\)](#).

**D. Follow-up Inspections.**

The OSH Division in the National Office of the Solicitor's Office will notify the RSOL and the Directorate of Enforcement Programs (and, where the order pertains to a construction employer, the Directorate of Construction), when a court has entered an [11\(b\)](#) order. OSHA will then promptly schedule an inspection or investigation to determine whether the employer is complying with the court order. The Regional Administrator, in consultation with the RSOL, will determine the nature and extent of the inspection or investigation. The RSOL will advise on the kind of "clear and convincing" evidence that would be needed to support a contempt petition in the event of the employer's noncompliance with the order of the court.

**E. Conduct of Verification Inspections**

Whenever an enforcement order is issued by a Court of Appeals, an inspection shall be scheduled within six months to determine whether the company is complying with the court order. If serious violations of the standard(s) subject to the enforcement order are found, the RSOL shall be contacted immediately for guidance on what evidence will be needed for submission to the court.

# APPENDIX A United States of America

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

*Subpoena Duces Tecum*

TO : \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to Section 8(b) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (29 U.S.C. §657(b))  
you are hereby required to appear before

\_\_\_\_\_  
of the OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, at \_\_\_\_\_, in the city of  
\_\_\_\_\_, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at  
\_\_\_\_\_ o'clock am/pm of that day, to testify regarding the working conditions  
maintained by \_\_\_\_\_

And you are hereby required to bring with you and produce at said time and place  
the following books, papers, and documents, including information stored electronically:

\_\_\_\_\_

**FAIL NOT AT YOUR PERIL**

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF *I have hereunto affixed my  
signature and the seal of the UNITED STATES*

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR at *(Insert Location)* this  
\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert month and year)*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Insert name of Regional Administrator), Occupational  
Safety and Health Administration, United States  
Department of Labor*



**APPENDIX B**  
**United States of America**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

*Subpoena Ad Testificandum*

TO : \_\_\_\_\_

Pursuant to Section 8(b) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (29 U.S.C. §657(b))  
you are hereby required to appear before

\_\_\_\_\_

of the OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ADMINISTRATION, UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, at \_\_\_\_\_, in the city of

\_\_\_\_\_, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, at

\_\_\_\_\_ o'clock am/pm of that day, to testify regarding the working conditions

maintained by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**FAIL NOT AT YOUR PERIL**

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF *I have hereunto affixed my*  
*signature and the seal of the UNITED STATES*

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR at *(Insert Location) this*

\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ *(insert month and year).*



\_\_\_\_\_  
(Insert name of Regional Administrator), Occupational Safety  
and Health Administration, United States Department of Labor

RETURN OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a duplicate original of the attached subpoena was duly served as follows:

in person \_\_\_\_\_  
by leaving at principal office or place of business \_\_\_\_  
by registered mail \_\_\_\_\_ :

(Indicate by check method used.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

on the person named herein on

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Month, day, year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person making service)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Official title)

I certify that the person named herein was

in attendance as a witness at \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

on \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month, day or days, and year)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Name of person certifying)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Official title)



## **Chapter 16**

### **DISCLOSURE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)**

#### **I. Disclosure [Reserved]**