

July, 2007

The Costs of Safety Errors in the Automotive Industry

Last year, OSHA issued over 2000 citations in the Automotive Repair and Services industry, totaling over half a million dollars in penalties. Avoiding costly OSHA citations requires that you provide a safe workplace and understand what OSHA might focus on in your business. Looking at last year's most frequent and costly OSHA citations can give you insight into where to focus your compliance activities.

Emphasis Area	Total Cost	# of Citations	Rank of Frequency
Personal Protective Equipment	\$ 170,485	881	1
Facility/Work Environment	\$ 89,756	188	3
Hazard Communication	\$ 74,380	413	2
Electrical	\$ 57,970	132	5
Machine Guarding	\$ 53,642	76	7
Hazardous Materials	\$ 33,459	90	6
Toxic and Hazardous Substances	\$ 33,174	151	4
Permit-Required Confined Space	\$ 31,130	13	10
Lockout/Tagout	\$ 25,369	29	8
Materials Handling	\$ 12,306	28	9

SIC 7500 (Automotive Repair, Services, And Parking) for October 2005 - September 2006, www.osha.gov.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was both the most frequently cited regulation and also the most costly, totaling \$170,485. Violations of the respiratory protection standard made up the majority of these citations – 80%! Specifically, citations were issued, in order of frequency, on the following:

- Respiratory Protection
- PPE – General Requirements
- Eye and Face Protection
- Hand protection
- Foot Protection
- Head Protection



OSHA found that employers were either not providing necessary equipment based on the job hazards, not providing employees with the proper training, or not ensuring that employees were wearing the required equipment. Even when the employee furnishes his or her own protective equipment, it is the employer's responsibility to assure its adequacy on an on-going basis.

Facility

These issues were another frequent and costly citation area. This type of citation includes violations in: provision of medical services and first aid (typically, lack of a first aid kit); portable fire extinguishers; safe walking and working surfaces; guarding floor and wall openings; exits and exit routes; industrial stairs; ventilation; sanitation; use of ladders; accident prevention signs and tags; and other similar issues. OSHA regulations clearly spell out requirements for emergency preparedness and the provision of a safe work environment; the key here is to understand these regulations.

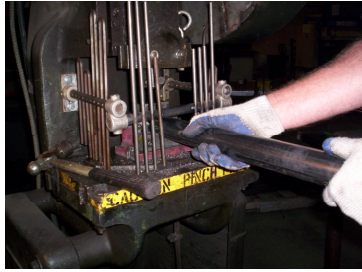


Electrical

Hazard Communication

Hazard Communication, or "Right-to-Know" continues to be one of the most frequent citations across all industries. If you have even one hazardous chemical in the workplace, you must have a hazard communication program. This program must be in writing if you have more than 10 employees. You must have a material safety data sheet (MSDS) for each chemical in the workplace, an appropriate labeling system, and a training program that ensures that employees understand their risks and how to protect themselves.

Electrical hazards were another frequently cited area. Be sure that your wiring is up to code, and that you use flexible wiring only for approved applications. Use the right extension cord for the tool, and be sure that you have GFI protection where needed.



Machine Guarding and Safe Equipment Use

Machine guarding and safe equipment use also made the top 5 list for citation areas. It is critical that employers be aware of the OSHA regulations that pertain to the specifications, use, and maintenance requirements of their tools and equipment. The safe condition and use of all equipment, including that furnished by employees, is the responsibility of the employer. Leaving manufacturers' guards in place is one simple way to stay in compliance in this area.



Hazardous Materials violations include improper environments and operations for spray finishing, storage and use of flammable and combustible liquids, storage and use of compressed and liquefied petroleum gases, dipping and coating operations, and hazardous waste management and emergency response.



Toxic and Hazardous Substances violations include exposure to dangerous airborne contaminants and other substances such as lead, methylene chloride, asbestos, cadmium, and formaldehyde. Employees must have access to their exposure and medical records related to these substances.

Permit-Required Confined Space

Because they have the potential to be so hazardous, OSHA has stringent regulations for precautions that must be taken when employees work in confined spaces. Although there were only 13 citations of this standard, these violations were costly, totaling \$31,130. Make sure that you are meeting all of OSHA's requirements for confined work spaces before you permit employees to enter them.



Lockout/Tagout

Safe Lockout/Tagout procedures are critical because these types of accidents tend to be very severe, typically resulting in amputations or death. OSHA's Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout) Standard is designed to protect personnel when maintenance or repairs are being performed on equipment. This regulation: (1) identifies the practices and procedures necessary to shut down and lockout or tagout machines and equipment; (2) requires that all employees receive training in their role in the lockout/tagout program; and (3) mandates that periodic inspections be conducted to maintain or enhance your lockout/tagout program.

Materials Handling

Violations of materials handling regulations also made the top 10 list. This includes use of powered industrial trucks and other materials handling equipment, as well as general practices in handling materials. It is essential that your employees have the training and knowledge to use materials handling equipment properly and that you have safe work procedures established at your facility.



Other Citations issued in significant quantities include Welding, Cutting & Brazing, Recordkeeping, and Noise Exposure.

The first step in avoiding OSHA citations is to understand what OSHA requires you to do. Obviously, then you must develop safety programs accordingly, and train your employees so that they understand their hazards and what they must do to protect themselves. Developing a safety program may seem like a daunting and expensive task, but studies have shown a \$4-6 return on every \$1 spent on safety and health. TechneTrain has a full line of easy-to-understand reference materials for the automotive industry to help you keep your business current and in compliance with OSHA Regulations and also training programs to facilitate the required employee training.