

What's OSHA Doing in the Restaurant Industry?

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OSHA has recently released its citation data for last year. Restaurants rated in the top 3% among all industries for OSHA violations in certain categories: the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard, requirements for safe walking and working surfaces (slips, trips and falls), and for provision and use of personal protective equipment. Safety incidents can lead to escalating overhead costs! 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 OSHA citations can give you insight into where to focus your compliance activities.

Emphasis Area
1. Electrical
2. Facility (Slips, Trips and Falls)
3. Hazard Communication
4. Personal Protective Equipment (Cuts, Burns and Scalds)

SIC 5810 (Eating and Drinking Places) for October 2007 - September 2008, www.osha.gov.



Electrical Safety

Electrical hazards were the most frequently cited area. Citations included general requirements, selection and use of work practices, wiring methods, safeguards for personnel protection, and wiring design and protection.

Housekeeping and Facility Maintenance

These issues were the second most frequent and costly citation area. These include violations in safe walking and working surfaces (slips, trips and falls), portable fire extinguishers, safe passageways and means of exit, medical services and first aid, emergency action plans, and others. Most of these violations are easily avoided by understanding regulations and developing safe work practices.



Hazard Communication continues to be cited where restaurants require their workers to use chemicals without informing them of the hazards of these materials. The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard requires employers to provide a comprehensive hazard assessment of the chemicals they use, and have a comprehensive hazard communication program, which must be in writing if you have 10 or more employees.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was another frequently cited regulation.

Specifically, citations were issued, in order of frequency, on the following:

- PPE – General Requirements
- Respiratory Protection
- Eye and Face Protection
- Hand 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 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.