



OSHA FACT Sheet

Occupational Safety and Health for Federal Employees

Do federal employees need occupational safety and health protection?

Yes, because thousands of federal employees are injured, become ill, or are killed in work-related incidents each year. During fiscal year 2000, more than 79,300 occupational injuries and illnesses involved civilian federal employees. In addition to the human dimension of this issue, worker compensation billings for all federal employees in 2000 totaled more than \$2 billion.

What measures protect federal workers?

Congress passed the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act)* “to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources.” Section 19 of the Act specifically charges the head of each federal agency with the responsibility to “establish and maintain an effective and comprehensive occupational safety and health program which is consistent with the standards” set by OSHA for private-sector employers. Executive Order 12196 further defines that broad mandate by identifying agency responsibilities and the role of the Secretary of Labor in developing, implementing, and evaluating such programs. *Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)*, Part 1960, gives the details of Department of Labor regulations and standards.

What must agencies do to protect federal employees?

Federal agencies must take the following steps to protect their workers:

- Provide workplaces free from recognized health and safety hazards.
- Establish procedures for responding to workplace emergencies and reporting unsafe and unhealthful working conditions.
- Acquire, maintain, and require the use of approved personal protective equipment.

- Inspect all workplaces annually with employee representatives.
- Establish procedures to assure that employees are not subject to restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal for exercising their rights under an agency’s safety and health program.
- Post notices of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions found during inspections.
- Abate hazardous conditions promptly, and notify employees exposed to such conditions.
- Correct conditions immediately that involve imminent danger.
- Keep records of accidents, injuries, illnesses and their causes and post annual summaries for the required period of time. (See 29 *CFR* Part 1960.66-74.)
- Conduct occupational health and safety training for top management, supervisors, safety and health personnel, employees, and employee representatives.
- Comply with all OSHA occupational safety and health standards and rules.
- Develop and implement a site-specific safety and health program consistent with OSHA standards.
- Display conspicuously a poster informing employees of the provisions of the *OSH Act*, Executive Order 12196, and the agency safety and health program under 29 *CFR* 1960.
- Designate an official with sufficient authority to manage the agency occupational safety and health program.

What must workers do to protect themselves?

As a federal employee, you must comply with agency policies, procedures, and directives concerning health and safety; use personal protective equipment and other safety equipment provided by the agency; and observe all agency safety and health rules, procedures, and standards.

What rights do workers have?

Federal employees are entitled to do the following:

- Participate in your agency's health and safety program and related activities on official time;
- Access your agency's safety and health information, including data on hazardous substances in your workplace;
- Comment on proposed agency standards that differ from OSHA standards;
- Obtain copies of medical and exposure records; and
- Report and request inspections of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions to federal officials including the Secretary of Labor.

How can I get more information?

You can find more information about occupational safety and health for federal employees, including the full text of OSHA's

standards, on OSHA's website at www.osha.gov. Additional resources explaining this subject in greater detail are available from OSHA. OSHA Directive FAP 1.3, *Federal Safety and Health Programs*, is available on OSHA's website. For more information about occupational safety and health for federal employees, visit us at <http://www.osha.gov/oshprogs/fedprogs.html>.

To file a complaint by phone, report an emergency, or get OSHA advice, assistance, or products, contact your nearest OSHA office under the "U.S. Department of Labor" listing in your phone book, or call us toll-free at **(800) 321-OSHA (6742)**. The teletypewriter (TTY) number is (877) 889-5627. To file a complaint online or obtain more information on OSHA federal and state programs, visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies, or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements or carry the force of legal opinion. For compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to *Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations*. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 693-1999. See also OSHA's website at www.osha.gov.

