

## OSHA Cornerstones

Second Quarter 2018

### OSHA Delays Beryllium Rule and Clarifies Requirements for Construction and Shipyards

Although OSHA's final rule on beryllium exposure in the general, construction and shipyard industries became effective on May 20, 2017, the agency recently announced that it will delay enforcement until May 11, 2018. OSHA also announced that some of the rule's requirements will vary between the three affected industries. Beryllium is a toxic metal that's commonly found in machine parts, electronics and aircraft. The metal is a known carcinogen and can also cause respiratory problems, skin disease and many other adverse health effects. For these reasons, OSHA has lowered the exposure limits for employers in the general, construction and shipyard industries:

- The permissible exposure limit (PEL) of an eight-hour average has been lowered to 0.2 micrograms per cubic meter of air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ). The previous PEL was 2.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , a limit that OSHA found to pose a significant health hazard to employees.
- The short-term exposure limit (STEL) over a 15-minute period has been lowered to 2.0  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

Although the new beryllium rule contains additional requirements, OSHA will only require the construction and shipyard industries to follow the new PEL and STEL. The agency stated that employees in these industries don't frequently work near dangerous amounts of beryllium and are protected by the safety requirements found in other OSHA standards.

General industry employers must follow these additional beryllium control methods:

- Provide exposure assessment to employees who are reasonably expected to be exposed to beryllium.
- Establish, maintain and distinguish work areas that may contain dangerous amounts of beryllium.
- Create and regularly update a written beryllium exposure plan.
- Provide adequate respiratory protection and other personal protective equipment to employees who work near beryllium.
- Train employees on beryllium hazards and control methods.

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- Maintain work areas that contain beryllium and—under certain conditions— establish facilities for employees to wash and change out of contaminated clothing or equipment.

**For more information on the new rule, call us at 920-921-5921 and ask to see our Compliance Bulletin on beryllium exposure.**

## Majority of Establishments Failed to Submit 2016 Electronic Reporting Data

According to a new report from Bloomberg Environment, a majority of the establishments that were required to submit 2016 injury and illness data under OSHA's electronic reporting rule failed to do so. OSHA expected to receive about 350,000 reports, but the agency only received just over 150,000.

The final date to submit 2016 injury and illness reports was Dec. 31, 2017, but this date was delayed a number of times as OSHA worked to build its Injury Tracking Application and improve its cyber security. Bloomberg also attributes the large number of missing reports to confusion about exemptions, as OSHA received over 60,000 reports from exempt establishments.

Under the rule, the following establishments must submit data electronically:

- Establishments with 250 or more employees that are required to keep injury and illness records must submit OSHA Forms 300, 300A and 301.
- Establishments with 20 to 249 employees that work in industries with historically high rates of occupational injuries and illnesses must submit OSHA Form 300A.

The final date to submit 2017 injury and illness data electronically is July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019, data from the previous calendar year must be submitted by March 2 annually.

## OSHA Releases Two New Fact Sheets on Electricity Safety

OSHA has released two electricity fact sheets in order to protect employees who frequently work with electricity and power lines. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, electricity causes over 150 fatalities and 1,500 injuries in U.S. workplaces every year.

Here are some of the topics included in the first new fact sheet, which can provide tips for engineers, electricians and other employees who work with electricity:

- Generators
- Power lines
- Extension cords
- Equipment
- Electrical incidents

The second fact sheet focuses on downed electrical wires and can help employees involved in recovery efforts following disasters and severe weather events.

Protecting employees from electrical hazards not only keeps your business productive, it can also save you from costly OSHA citations. The agency's electrical wiring method standard is one of the top 10 most frequently cited standards nearly every year.

**To learn more, contact the Property & Casualty experts at Hierl today.**