

Regulatory Compliance

Your New Year Workplace Compliance Checklist

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The new year can bring on a rush of compliance reviews across the workplace. Take time this January to make sure your organization is up-to-date with federal regulations to avoid having to pay unnecessary fines and fees once the new year rolls around.

General regulations

Not every company operates in the same industry, but every business is expected to follow certain OSHA standards. Some of these standards are as simple as hanging the OSHA job safety and health poster in a visible area. Create a checklist and make sure these items get checked off:

- **Hazard communication:** All hazardous material must be marked appropriately in any office, warehouse or facility, according to OSHA. Companies that regularly expose employees to chemicals must have a program prepared and implemented that covers safety precautions and what to do in the case of an accident.
- **Office fires:** Workplaces need to have a fire prevention plan available for employees.
- **First aid:** Medical care and supplies are required in any type of workplace. The medical equipment provided must align with the occupational hazards that may occur at the facility.
- **Walking surfaces:** Signs and labels need to be available for all walkways, including floors, ladders, steps and platforms.
- **Exits:** All building doors must be marked appropriately.
- **Emergency plan:** OSHA recommends all workplaces have an emergency action plan ready in case a dangerous situation arises, but it is only required when it is an industry standard.

Specific standards

For every industry there are certain standards that must be met, and these differ from specific workplace requirements. All of the following are *frequently checked during inspections*, according to OSHA:

- **Manufacturing:** Production in this market usually relies on sound operation of machinery, so it comes as no surprise that's where most of the fines stem from. Companies paid nearly \$25 million for over 13,000 citations in 2015. These infractions included a lack of general requirements and training for machines, improper control of *lockout and tagout* equipment and inadequate respiratory protection.
- **Warehouses:** These facilities were cited 952 times between 2014 and 2015 for about \$1.7 million. Common violations involved issues with powered industrial trucks, hazard communication and assuring that safeguards were properly working. Make sure employees are properly trained with all of the warehouse equipment, and install signs in dangerous areas and situations.
- **Construction:** The construction industry was handed around 32,000 citations for a grand total of \$65 million during 2015. A lack of fall protection became a serious concern across the market, and \$22 million in fines were doled out because of it. The absence of training programs and a shortage of eye and face protection among employees were also reasons for fines.

Previously featured on National Marker's Safety Matters Blog.