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CompChronicles

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Issue 4

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Did you know?

Workplace violence

Washington, DC (WorkersCompensation.com) - The Occupational Safety and Health Administration today (September 9, 2011) issued a directive on [Enforcement Procedures for Investigating or Inspecting Incidents of Workplace Violence](#). The directive establishes uniform procedures for OSHA field staff for responding to incidents and complaints of workplace violence and conducting inspections in industries considered vulnerable to workplace violence, such as healthcare and social service settings, and late-night retail establishments.



Workplace violence is a serious recognized occupational hazard, ranking among the top four causes of death in workplaces during the past 15 years.

A recent OSHA inspection of a Maine psychiatric [hospital](#) found more than 90 instances in which workers were assaulted on the job by patients from 2008 through 2010. The hospital was cited for not providing its workers with adequate safeguards against workplace violence and a fine of more than \$6,000 was proposed. "These incidents and others like them can be avoided or decreased if employers take appropriate precautions to protect their workers," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "We have accompanied this directive with a new web page on preventing workplace violence to help employers address workplace violence issues."

OSHA has launched a new [web page](#) on preventing workplace violence and has published several workplace violence guidance documents including [Recommendations for Workplace Violence Prevention Programs in Late-Night Retail Establishments](#) and [Guidelines for Preventing Workplace Violence for Health Care and Social Service Workers](#).

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance.

Continued on reverse →

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Claim Account Executives

EAST
Carleen.Church@rtwi.com

CENTRAL
Jana.Johnson@rtwi.com

WEST
Joel.Partida@StateAuto.com

Loss Prevention Consultants

MN, WI, IA, IL, MO, IN, KY, TN
Roger.Dahlke@rtwi.com

COLORADO
Mike.Testa@rtwi.com

MICHIGAN
Mike.Flanigan@rtwi.com

RTW PlaceRite® Practice Leader

Al.Beraki@rtwi.com
(952) 897-6131



Dear CompChronicles

Dear CompChronicles:

If an employee fails to follow protocol and violates one of our policies that results in a work injury, is that work injury denied?

—CC

Dear CC:

If the injury clearly arises out of employment and is in the course of their employment it will be a compensable injury, however, from an HR standpoint, you can discipline those employees for not complying with your current policy.

Loss prevention *Good housekeeping in the workplace*

What is the purpose of workplace housekeeping?

- tripping over loose objects on floors, stairs and platforms
- being hit by falling objects
- slipping on greasy, wet or dirty surfaces
- striking against projecting, poorly stacked items or misplaced material
- cutting, puncturing, or tearing the skin of hands or other parts of the body on projecting nails, wire or steel strapping

To avoid these hazards, a workplace must “maintain” order throughout a workday. Although this effort requires a great deal of management and planning, the benefits are many.

What are some benefits of good housekeeping practices?

Effective housekeeping results in:

- reduced handling to ease the flow of materials
- fewer tripping and slipping accidents in clutter-free and spill-free work areas
- decreased fire hazards
- lower worker exposures to hazardous substances (e.g. dusts, vapors)
- better control of tools and materials, including inventory and supplies
- more efficient equipment cleanup and maintenance
- better hygienic conditions leading to improved health
- more effective use of space
- reduced property damage by improving preventive maintenance
- less janitorial work
- improved morale
- improved productivity (tools and materials will be easy to find)

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