

OSHA Announces Inspection Plan for 2003

OSHA announced this week the new site-specific targeting (SST) plan that will target approximately 3,200 high-hazard worksites for unannounced comprehensive safety and health inspections over the coming year.

"The purpose of our targeted inspection program is to more effectively allocate our inspection resources to those workplaces of highest safety and health risk," said OSHA Administrator John Henshaw. "This program gives us the opportunity to focus our enforcement where it will have the most benefit to workers and employers."

For five successive years, OSHA has used a site-specific targeting inspection program based on injury and illness data. This year's program stems from OSHA's Data Initiative for 2002, which surveyed approximately 95,000 employers to attain their injury and illness data for 2001. (The construction industry was included in the survey for the first time; however, it is not included in the SST.)

This year's program is effective June 16 and will initially cover about 3,200 individual worksites on the primary list that reported 14.0 or more injuries or illnesses resulting in lost work days or restricted activity for every 100 full-time workers (known as the LWDII rate). For the first time, sites will also be targeted based on a "Days Away from Work Injury and Illness" (DAFWII) rate of nine or higher (nine or more cases that involve days away from work per 100 full-time employees). Employers who reported LWDII rates of between 8.0 and 14.0, or DAFWII rates of between 4.0 and 9.0, will be placed on a secondary list for possible inspection. The average LWDII rate in 2001 for private industry in the nation was 2.8; the average DAFWII rate was 1.7.

Like last year, OSHA will not inspect nursing homes or personal care facilities under this program. Those inspections will continue to be covered under a separate National Emphasis Program that addresses specific hazards for the industry, including ergonomics (primarily back injuries from resident handling), bloodborne pathogens/tuberculosis, and slips, trips and falls.

Finally, the agency will again randomly select and inspect about 200 workplaces across the nation that reported low injury and illness rates for the purpose of reviewing the actual degree of compliance with OSHA requirements. These establishments are selected from those industries with above average LWDII and DAFWII rates.