

Safety Newsletter

October 4, 2024

Volunteer fire departments face risks due to OSHA rule 🚒



TL;DR: Volunteer fire departments may close due to OSHA's proposed rule, which imposes costly compliance burdens. There's bipartisan support for an exemption, highlighting the need for balanced safety and economic considerations.

- Volunteer fire departments may face closure due to OSHA's proposed emergency response rule if not accommodated.
- Compliance with the new rule could cost volunteer departments approximately \$14,000 annually, affecting their budgets.
- There is increasing pressure from fire chiefs and lawmakers for a blanket exemption for volunteer firefighters.

- Congress shows bipartisan support for reconsidering the applicability of OSHA's rule to volunteer fire departments.

Why this matters: The proposed OSHA rule poses a serious threat to volunteer fire departments, which are essential for emergency response in rural areas. Ensuring compliance may financially cripple these departments, potentially leading to closures and diminished emergency services, thus highlighting the critical need for regulatory accommodations to safeguard public safety.

Nassau County boosts school safety amid rising threats. 🏠



TL;DR: Nassau County is boosting school safety amid rising threats, emphasizing suspicious behavior reporting, increasing police presence, and implementing new safety tools and training facilities to protect students.

- Nassau County is enhancing school safety due to a surge in reported threats this academic year.
- Officials emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious behavior and encouraging children to speak up.
- Increased police presence in schools and new safety tools aim for quicker emergency response.

- Proactive measures include SWAT team placement, K-9 units, and a new training facility for police.

Why this matters: The significant rise in school threats highlights the urgent need for improved security measures. Enhancing school safety fosters a secure educational environment, encouraging students to report concerns. These proactive initiatives not only address immediate risks but also promote community engagement in safeguarding youth, fundamentally protecting their educational experience.

NSSGA awards honor safety excellence in aggregates industry 🏆



TL;DR: NSSGA awarded safety excellence honors at its forum, recognizing zero-injury operations and low-accident companies. Steve Benton received the James M. Christie Award for his exceptional safety leadership initiatives.

- The NSSGA honored various safety award winners during its annual Legislative & Policy Forum.
- The Safety Excellence Awards recognize aggregates operations with zero MSHA-reportable injuries over a consecutive period.

- Louis Griesemer Sterling Safety Awards highlight member companies with the lowest accident incidence rates in their categories.
- The James M. Christie Award was given to Steve Benton for his leadership in enhancing safety initiatives.

Why this matters: Recognizing excellence in safety practices reinforces the commitment to preventing workplace injuries in the aggregates industry. Awards like the Safety Excellence and Sterling Safety Awards motivate companies to prioritize safety, ultimately enhancing industry standards, improving employee well-being, and fostering a culture of accountability and leadership in safety initiatives.

Truck driver awarded for prioritizing safety overload 🚚



TL;DR: A truck driver was awarded nearly \$30,000 after being fired for refusing to haul an oversize load without a required escort, highlighting safety regulation importance in trucking.

- A truck driver was awarded nearly \$30,000 after being terminated for prioritizing safety concerns over an oversize load.

- The termination was influenced by a dispatcher who pressured the driver to ignore safety regulations.
- The driver's refusal to haul the load without proper escort led to threats of unloading and termination.
- OSHA determined the company's actions caused suffering, warranting compensatory and punitive damages for the driver.

Why this matters: This case underscores the critical importance of safety regulations in the trucking industry. It illustrates the repercussions of prioritizing profits over safety, affecting not only the driver's livelihood but also broader industry standards. Additionally, it highlights OSHA's role in enforcing workers' rights and protecting public safety.

Quick Review

OSHA's Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) Standard is designed to protect workers from hazardous energy during maintenance and servicing of machinery. This standard requires employers to implement proper procedures for shutting down equipment, isolating energy sources, and preventing accidental startup. LOTO includes the use of locks and tags, as well as training for workers on safe practices. Following LOTO procedures helps prevent serious injuries like electrocution, amputation, and crushing, promoting a safer workplace by ensuring that machines stay properly de-energized during repairs.

Trivia Question:

Under OSHA's Lockout/Tagout (LOTO) standard, which of the following is a primary step in ensuring machinery is safely de-energized before maintenance?

- A) Remove all safety guards
- B) Apply locks and tags to isolate energy sources
- C) Notify coworkers of maintenance
- D) Conduct a workplace hazard assessment

Last week's Answer: **A) Section 5(a)(1)**

Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act is known as the General Duty Clause. It requires employers to provide a workplace free from recognized hazards that are likely to cause death or serious harm to employees. This clause is a key provision that allows OSHA to enforce safety standards even in situations where no specific regulation applies. The General Duty Clause serves as a broad framework to ensure employers take reasonable steps to prevent workplace hazards and protect employees, even if those hazards are not explicitly covered by other OSHA regulations.

Find out the answer in next week's newsletter!