Keeping Up With OSHA: Lessons from the Overlooked Workplace

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Keeping Up with OSHA: *Lessons From The Overlooked Workplace, Part 3*

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Keeping Up With OSHA: Lessons from the Overlooked Workplace, Part 3

Part two of this series focused on the employer’s obligations to file workers’ compensation claims promptly and the dangers of delayed reporting. This week’s report highlights what employers need to know about OSHA’s new workplace incident reporting requirements.

The very word “OSHA,” or the name of your state’s occupational safety agency, can bring trepidation to the heart of Human Resource directors and church safety officers. Failure to comply with on-the-job injury reporting requirements can result in government penalties and fines being charged to the denominational organization.

Denominational employers need to know and understand the reporting and recordkeeping laws mandated by OSHA or your state’s agency. Prompt filing of the first notice to the organization’s workers’ compensation insurer does not satisfy OSHA’s required compliance notification of reportable accidents. It is the employer’s responsibility to file the mandatory notifications to OSHA and the state’s safety agencies, as required by law.

OSHA Section 29 CFR Part 1904 outlines employer’s responsibilities to record and report work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses. Many religious organizations, schools and universities are exempt from specific requirements of Part 1904. However, all employers must comply with Part 1904.39(a) - Reporting Fatality, Injury and Illness Information to the Government.

In January 2015, a major change took effect in OSHA reporting requirements under Part 1904.39 (a). However, the mandate for all employers to report any fatality within eight hours from the time of the incident remains unchanged. The new regulation requires employers to report the following types of workplace incidents to OSHA within 24 hours of the employer’s knowledge:

- Hospitalization of an individual employee if the hospitalization occurs within 24 hours of the incident.
- All work-related amputations and enucleations (loss of an eye) if they occur within 24 hours of the incident.

Incident reports can be made via telephone to the OSHA 24-hour hotline at 800.321.6742, or the nearest OSHA office during regular business hours. For more information, visit the OSHA website.

Keeping up with OSHA may seem stressful. These regulations are in place to collect better information about incidents of occupational injuries and illnesses. They help prevent workplace incidents by improving employee awareness through the reporting process. Following these regulations helps keep your employees safe.

In this three-part series, three key workers’ compensation issues have been examined:

- Developing a safety awareness culture and training employees how to report workplace injuries promptly and properly.
- The added cost associated with delayed reporting of workers’ compensation claims.
The employer’s responsibilities in meeting OSHA and state safety agency reporting laws for fatalities and specific types of serious injuries requiring hospitalization.

In organizations where administrators wear numerous hats, these responsibilities can be easily overlooked. Workplace safety requires a team effort. Training employees to use safe practices and employers staying current with the reporting laws can help to avoid the pitfalls of the overlooked workplace.

Read Part 1: Cultivating a culture of Safety

Read Part 2: The Dangers of Delayed Reporting

References:
New OSHA Reporting Requirements Take Effective January 1, 2015, Sedgwick ebulletin, December 11, 2014

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