

# OSHA Proposes Rule to Streamline Standards

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In an effort to revise provisions in its standards that may be “confusing, outdated or unnecessary,” the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has proposed 18 changes to the agency’s recordkeeping, general industry, maritime and construction standards.

“The changes we propose will modernize OSHA standards, help employers better understand their responsibilities, increase compliance and reduce compliance costs,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “Most importantly, these revisions will improve the safety and health protections afforded to workers across all industries.”

The proposed revisions are expected to save employers an estimated \$3.2 million per year, according to OSHA. The 18 proposed revisions are as follows:

**Reporting Job-Related Hearing Loss:** OSHA recordkeeping regulations require employers to record and report occupational injuries and illnesses. The proposed revision clarifies that a determination whether an employee’s hearing loss is “work-related” must be made using specific, clear criteria, which are also set out in OSHA regulations.

**Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout):** The proposed revision clarifies employers’ duties under the lockout/tagout standard. The existing general industry standard requires protections against the “unexpected energization” of machinery during servicing. It removes the term “unexpected” to reflect OSHA’s original intent and eliminates confusion regarding applicability of the standard.

**Chest X-Ray (CXR) Requirements:** The revision removes the requirement for periodic CXR in the standards for inorganic arsenic, coke oven emissions and acrylonitrile to make OSHA’s requirement consistent with current medical practices and reduce employer burden and paperwork.

**X-Ray Storage:** The revision permits storage of x-rays in digital formats. The existing requirement for storage of x-ray film was adopted before the existence of digital x-ray and storage technology.

**Lung-Function Testing:** The revisions update the lung-function testing requirements for the cotton dust standard to make them consistent with current medical practices and technology.

**Feral Cats:** Existing requirements in the sanitation standard for shipyard employment specify that employers must maintain workplaces in a manner that prevents vermin infestation. OSHA recognizes that feral cats pose a minor, if any, threat, and tend to avoid human contact. OSHA proposes to remove the term “feral cats” from the definition of vermin in the standard.

**911 Emergency Services at Worksites:** Existing construction regulations require employers to conspicuously post telephone numbers for ambulances at worksites located in areas where 911 emergency dispatch services are not available. The revision updates this requirement to reflect the predominance of cell phones and the widespread adoption of 911 emergency dispatch services. It requires the posting of location information at worksites in areas that do not have enhanced 911, which automatically supplies the caller’s location information to the dispatcher.

**Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs):** The proposed revisions to the construction PELs requirements are corrections and clarifications to make this standard consistent with other OSHA PELs standards.

**Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals:** To avoid unnecessary duplication, OSHA proposes to replace the entire 31 pages of regulatory text for the process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals standard for construction with a cross reference to the identical general industry standard.

**Personal Protective Equipment:** Ensuring that personal protective equipment (PPE) properly fits each employee is essential to employees’ protection. The proposed revision to require employers to select PPE that properly fits each employee clarifies the construction PPE requirements and makes them consistent with general industry requirements.

**Lanyard/Lifeline Break Strength:** The proposed revision standardizes break-strength requirements for lanyards and lifelines throughout the construction and general industry standards.

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices:** The proposed revisions update and clarify the provisions related to traffic signs and devices, flaggers and barricades to align with current Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. This removes the burden on construction employers, who have sought this change, to follow multiple sets of regulations for OSHA, DOT, and state and local governments.

**Load Limit Postings:** The proposed revision exempts single family dwellings from a requirement to post maximum safe-load limits for floors in buildings under construction, reducing a burden for residential builders. The existing OSHA standard requires posting in residential dwellings where safe-load limits are rarely, if ever, an issue, thus eliminating a paperwork burden for construction employers.

**Excavation Hazards:** The proposed revision clarifies employers’ duties in the excavation standard. It clarifies that a hazard is presumed to exist when loose rock or soil and excavated material or equipment is beside a trench.

**MSHA Underground Construction – Diesel Engines:** Existing regulatory language requires that mobile diesel-powered equipment used underground comply with outdated Mine Safety Health Administration’s (MSHA) provisions. The revision updates the regulatory language to cross-reference to the revised MSHA provisions.

**Underground Construction:** The revision replaces outdated decompression

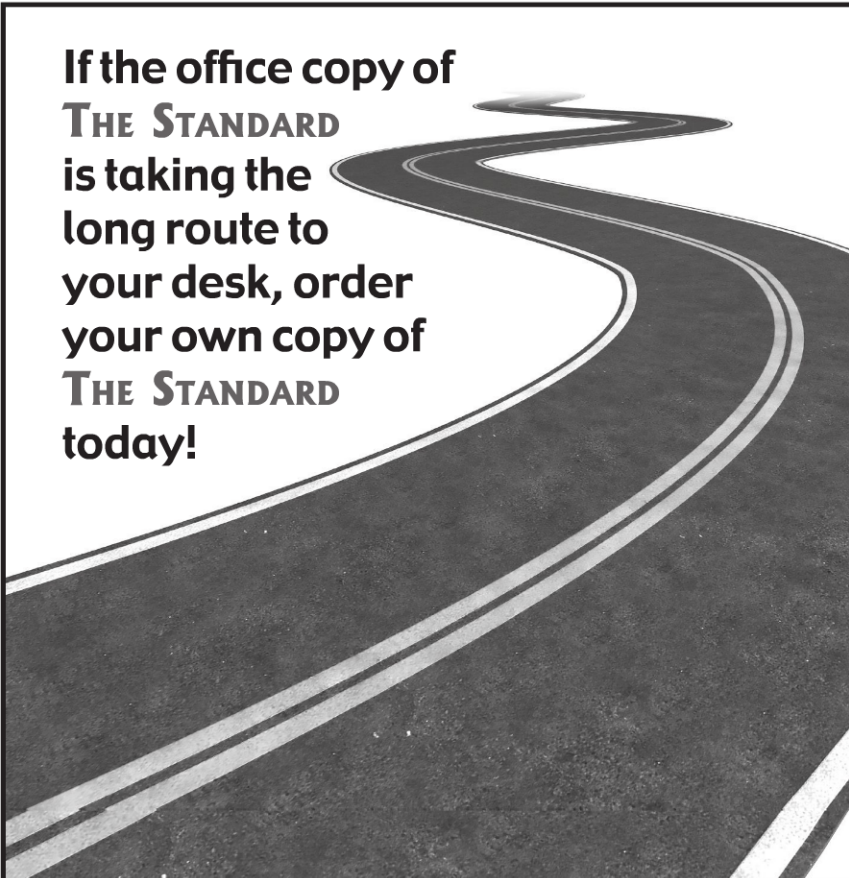
tables used to protect employees working in pressurized underground sites. It allows employers to use the modern French decompression tables.

**Rollover Protective Structures:** The proposed revision replaces the outdated construction standard with references to the appropriate consensus standards.

**Regulation of Coke Oven Emissions:** The proposed revision removes the regulation of coke oven emissions pro-

visions from the construction standards. Any work during operation of coke ovens is general industry work, and the standard does not fit construction work.


**Collecting Social Security Numbers:** The revision removes from general industry, construction and maritime standards all requirements to include an employee's Social Security number on exposure monitoring, medical surveillance and other records to protect privacy and prevent identity fraud. ■



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Kelly Cotter, Circulation Manager      October 13, 2016