

OSHA has long term care facilities in their crosshairs! In April 2012, OSHA announced a new National Emphasis Program (NEP) that clearly states OSHA will target nursing homes and residential care facilities in an effort to reduce occupational illnesses and injuries. It wasn't long ago that a healthcare facility could turn to OSHA for guidance, consultation, training, and other forms of assistance—but those days are gone! OSHA is now about enforcement and is using severe monetary penalties against long term care facilities to drive home this point.

Pendulum, in association with Sorensen, Wilder & Associates, is pleased to offer mock OSHA audits for long term care facilities. These audits, performed by certified and experienced healthcare safety professionals, provide a comprehensive review of a facility's safety management program, taking the same approach an OSHA compliance officer would take. Highlights include:

- A review of all written safety management plans and policies from a compliance perspective
- A review of training programs including content, instructor qualification, learning objectives, and participation
- A physical plant tour that focuses on unsafe conditions in the facility that may contribute to employee injury or illness
- Interviews with random staff members
- Review of all OSHA-required records and record-keeping practices
- An evaluation of the use of engineering and work practice controls in protecting employees from illness or injury
- Safety committee activities

By participating in a mock audit, your facility will recognize a number of benefits, including:

- The opportunity to identify and correct areas of noncompliance without the concern of severe monetary penalties
- Access to qualified healthcare safety professionals to answer questions regarding your safety management program and practices
- The information needed to prepare a strategic plan for safety improvements as well as interim action plans designed to minimize the risk for those items that may require financial planning and capital investment
- The ability to show OSHA that a facility is being proactive in managing workplace safety and has taken steps to minimize the risk to workers and maximize workplace safety because it is the right thing to do

After the audit, a written report is produced using a format similar to that used by OSHA. Along with recommendations for improvements, an estimate is provided of what the potential monetary penalties against a facility would be for each violation or deficiency noted. Thus, a facility quickly realizes the serious financial exposure it could face. The value is not only in the investment staff has made in the audit, but more importantly, it is in the investment made in managing the workplace safety.

Call Pendulum today for more information on these mock OSHA audits and add your name to the growing list of facilities that are taking advanced, proactive steps.

From the April 5, 2012 OSHA News Release:

Health care workers face numerous serious safety and health hazards, and the NEP will provide guidance to OSHA compliance staff on the policies and procedures for targeting and conducting inspections specifically focused on the hazards associated with nursing and residential care. These hazards include exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material; exposure to other communicable diseases such as tuberculosis; ergonomic stressors related to lifting patients; workplace violence; and slips, trips, and falls. Workers also may be exposed to hazardous chemicals and drugs.


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