

*Creating workplaces that work... for everyone*

## Upstairs, Downstairs, in Your File Cabinet: They're Workplace Hazards

An unlabeled can of chemicals would strike most of us as a workplace hazard. But so are out-of-date fire extinguishers, ungrounded extension cords, missing switch plates, cluttered aisles and the lack of documents to show that you've trained your employees in safety.

A workplace hazard is anything that could cause an injury or illness. OSHA has established fines for violations in six major categories of workplace hazards: Facility, OSHA/Blockage, OSHA/Electrical, OSHA/Chemical, Housekeeping and OSHA/Hazards. OSHA violations may result in fines. But more importantly, when you identify and correct hazards, you create a safe and healthy work environment. That means fewer illnesses or injuries, higher morale, greater productivity and often lower Workers' Compensation costs.

OSHA's Facility category includes tripping hazards such as wires or hoses across walkways. OSHA/Blockage includes blocked fire extinguishers, electrical panels and exits. You want to keep exits and walkways clear at all times and keep 36 inches of clearance in front of any electrical panels.

The OSHA/Electrical category is one of the most common causes for citations according to the NH Department of Labor. It includes items such as unlabeled circuit breakers and panels with duct tape covering the opening, as well as ungrounded extension cords.

Our 1st quarter 2006 newsletter described the importance of Material Safety Data Sheets, and how to set them up. They're part of the requirements in the

OSHA/Chemical category. Also, if you move chemicals from their original containers into secondary containers for ease of use, OSHA now requires that you label the secondary containers to identify which target organs are at risk from exposure to the chemicals. We'll be happy to send you a sample of the new labels.

A ladder left leaning against the wall is a violation under the OSHA/Hazards category (unsecured equipment). So are machines without proper guards and Personal Protective Equipment that's in poor repair (see our 2nd quarter 2005 issue).

Finally, we come to Housekeeping. Slips and falls at work cause many Workers' Compensation claims, and wet floors are a prime cause. Sharps, such as razor blades, are another workplace hazard.

At HR Compliance 101 we not only identify hazards, we work with you protect against them and document your compliance. Call us if you have any concerns related to workplace hazards.

### FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

"For us, outsourcing was a very good alternative. HR Compliance 101 doesn't just do things for us; they teach us how to do them."

GARY BARNARD, Owner,  
Moldpro Inc., West Swanzey, NH

This newsletter refers to some of the regulations that may currently apply to small businesses.

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## Compliance Alert

You've just hired a new employee, part-time or full-time. Congratulations on your continued growth! Now it's time to report that new hire to New Hampshire Employment Security.

Businesses must report all new employees and identify any independent contractors on the "New Hire Reporting Form." Once the new hire or contractor performs any service for your business, you have 20 days to mail or fax the form to Concord.

If you don't have the form, please contact HR Compliance 101, LLC, and we'll get it for you.



## Workplace and Training Solutions

- Q.** Every time I walk into the tool room, some employee is cleaning a tool but not wearing safety glasses. A sign saying "Safety Glasses Required" is posted on the door. What more can I do?
- A.** You must take disciplinary action when an employee fails to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The Safety Summary Form required every other year by New Hampshire has a specific question on this issue.

You (or your employer) should post a chart that identifies which PPE must be worn for each task. The chart should be reviewed every year with all employees. If you don't have a chart, HR Compliance 101 will help you create one. We'll also help develop training and disciplinary procedures to make sure employees comply.

### FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Did you post your form from your Workers' Compensation carrier? Your carrier must provide it free. Read what it says, post it and let us know if you'd like a Temporary/Alternative Duty Policy. We're glad to help!