The complexities surrounding safety, risk management and compliance are daunting. Companies are challenged to stay on top of training, tracking and reporting requirements.

Moreover, the penalties can be costly in more ways than one: government fines, business interruption, claims, litigation, less-than-favorable insurance programs, your time and resources, and beyond.

Knowledge is your power and partner. Get familiar with the current OSHA rules and regulations, as well as the changes coming soon that will affect us all:

**RULES, RULES, RULES:** After many years in the works, OSHA’s updated Walking-Working Surfaces rule is projected in April 2016, covering slips, trips, and fall hazards, and establishing requirements for personal fall protection systems.

Rules lowering permissible exposure to silica are expected in February 2016.

The Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses rule, requiring employers with 250 or more employees to submit all injury and illness records on a quarterly basis, is projected for March 2016. Smaller employers in specific high-hazard industries would be required to submit annual summaries.

As a reminder, effective last January 1, 2015, recordkeeping and reporting requirements were updated. For more information, visit the general OSHA Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements page.

**FINES ON THE RISE:** Released in late 2015, OSHA fines are expected to rise, roughly 80% in some cases, for the first time since 1990. According to the Wall Street Journal, penalties for workplace-safety violations were increased due to a little-noticed provision of the budget bill, signed into law by President Barack Obama in November 2015. The article also states that the move brings fines in line with inflation over the past 25 years, would continue to allow them to rise with inflation for the future.

**IN GOOD FORM:** Reminder to employers to post their 300A OSHA Form by Feb. 1, which lists a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred during 2015. The form must be signed by the highest ranking person on site and posted between Feb. 1 and April 30, 2016. Employers must post the OSHA 300A form in their place of business near the OSHA/Labor poster.

For details on Form 300A, view and download the OSHA workbook which includes the form. For quick access to forms only, visit the OSHA forms page.

**EPA & REGULATORY AFFAIRS:** The EPA agenda for 2016, released last fall with The Unified Agenda of Regulatory and Deregulatory Actions, could have a significant impact on operations if some of the proposals make it to final rule. Full list here, but stay tuned for final decisions.

**AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION?** OSHA annually publishes its Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Standards, with the goal that companies “can take steps to find and fix recognized hazards addressed in these and other standards before OSHA shows up.” You can view more hot topics on the OSHA Enforcement web page.

Oswald is committed to our clients’ total workplace health & safety.

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