

OSHA Top 10 Most Frequently Cited Violations

Every year, OSHA cites thousands of companies for violating workplace safety regulations, but there are some standards that are cited much more than others. To educate employers on workplace dangers, the industrial safety agency publishes a list of its top 10 most-cited violations.

OSHA recently released its most frequently cited workplace violations for the year ended Sept. 30, and once again violations for failing to follow fall protection standards for employees working at heights was the number-one transgression, for the 12th year in a row.

All of the violations on this year's list also were on the previous year's list, although there was a good deal of shifting up or down the rankings. This year's top OSHA violations were cited as follows:

1. **Fall Protection — General Requirements** — 5,260 violations (1st place in 2021)

This sweeping standard addresses the protection of employees working at heights and facing a risk of falling. This can include violations for ladder safety, guardrails, safety nets or personal fall-arrest systems.

2. **Hazard Communication** — 2,424 violations (5th place in 2021)

The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard is designed to ensure chemical safety in the workplace. The standard requires workplaces to provide written information about the identities and hazards associated with the chemicals that must be available and understandable to workers.

3. **Respiratory Protection** — 2,185 violations (2nd place in 2021)

This standard applies to all occupational airborne exposures to contaminated air when the employee is exposed to a hazardous level of an airborne contaminant. It sets out when employers must require workers to wear a respirator, or be permitted to wear one.

Employers must provide evidence of adequate ventilation and attempts to substitute less hazardous materials in order to decrease employee risk.

4. **Ladders** — 2,143 violations (3rd place in 2021)

This expansive standard covers ladder safety in various types of environments and different types of ladders in the workplace, including distances between rungs and angles when leaning them against walls.

Ladders in fixed positions must also meet OSHA load-bearing requirements. When ladders are in use, their steps must be parallel and level.

5. **Scaffolding** — 2,058 violations (4th place in 2021)

The standard requires employers to protect each employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level from falling to that lower level.

It addresses a number of safety issues for scaffolding, including:

- Fall protection
- Guardrail height
- Cross bracing
- Midrails
- Footings
- Platforms
- Guying ties and braces
- Capacity
- Training
- Inspections.

6. **Lockout/Tagout** — 1,977 violations (6th place in 2021)

This standard focuses on preventing the accidental startup of machinery while it's turned off and being serviced. All machinery must be shut down, locked out and have a tag attached warning others not to turn the machine on, when maintenance and repairs are being conducted.

Workers must be trained in lockout/tagout procedures to reduce the risk of injury.

7. **Powered Industrial Trucks** — 1,749 violations (9th place in 2021)

This standard involves posted safety requirements for the use of forklifts, motorized hand trucks and other lift trucks by employees. These vehicles' standard operation and maintenance must meet OSHA standards for safe usage. Modifications to these vehicles must conform to OSHA safety regulations.

8. **Fall Protection — Training Requirements** — 1,556 violations (7th place in 2021)

This standard requires employers to deliver and document safety rules regarding fall prevention to employees.

Employers are also required to hold regular training sessions, and all concerned employees must complete these training sessions on at least an annual basis.

9. **Personal Protective and Lifesaving Equipment — Eye and Face Protection** — 1,401 violations (8th place in 2021)

This standard requires that employers furnish and employees wear eye and face protection when engaged in activities that could cause injury to the face or eyes from flying debris, particles, etc.

10. Machine Guarding — 1,370 violations (10th place in 2021)

This standard requires employers to install guards or shields on machines whose parts or debris can cause injuries to the operator or other nearby employees.

It also requires protection from flying sparks, chips or rotating parts. Eye protection devices must feature detachable side protection. Training for the use of these protectors must be done before employees use any machine that requires such protectors.

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