

EMPLOYER LAW BLOG

Health Care Alert: OSHA Targets Healthcare Facilities

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Timm Schowalter is a partner in the Phoenix office of Sandberg Phoenix & von Oertzen, LLP. He is a former OSHA administrator. David Michaels has stated, "It's time for hospitals and the health care industry to make the changes necessary to protect their workers." Workers' injury rates at nursing and residential care facilities are more than twice that of the overall private industry, and hospital workers face a rate nearly as high, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Therefore, OSHA has decided to target hospital and nursing facility for inspections on hazards that contribute to the industry's high injury rate. To address these injuries, an internal OSHA memorandum directs compliance officers to target hospitals and nursing facilities and inspect the following hazards:

- Musculoskeletal disorders related to patient handling
- Workplace violence
- Bloodborne pathogens
- Tuberculosis
- Slips, trips and falls

Employer Take Away: Employers should conduct an internal audit of their workplace and their safety policies and guidelines to ensure compliance with OSHA standards addressing the above referenced targeted areas.

Employers should also train and retain records of employee safety training and as well as employee discipline for safety violations.