

# What is OSHA?

Week Number 52 (December 24 - 30) 2017 Edition

## **Overview**

*OSHA was created by an act of Congress within the Federal Department of Labor in 1970, and its mission is to ensure that America's workplaces are safe. The Act provides for research, education, training, and standards enforcement in the occupational safety and health field. OSHA has requirements that both employees and employers must fulfill:*

- ***Employers must provide a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards with the potential to cause death or serious physical harm.***
- ***Employees must comply with safety and health standards, rules, regulations, and orders that apply to their conduct and actions while in the workplace.***

## **For Discussion**

The Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Act, in 1973, authorized Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) to conduct workplace inspections. MNOSHA also guarantees the employees' right to discuss workplace health and safety concerns with their employer or MNOSHA, the right to refuse to perform a job duty if they believe it places them in risk of death or serious injury and guarantees the employee against discrimination from their employer for exercising their rights under the OSHA Act.

During an inspection, the OSHA investigator will tour the workplace, inspecting the area for any safety hazards. Any unsafe or unhealthful conditions will be pointed out to the employer. The inspector may take photos or conduct a conference with the employer and an employee representative to discuss their findings and how any violations must be corrected. If OSHA believes that an employer has violated the Act, a citation will be issued. This citation must be displayed at or near the place of violation for three days, or until it is corrected, whichever is later. This warns employees of dangers that might exist there.

The Act encourages labor and management to work together to reduce hazards. All employees can contribute to a safe and healthful work environment. Being on the lookout for health or safety hazards helps everyone. By proactively tackling safety and health issues, we can ensure a better work environment for all.

## **Questions**

1. In what ways is OSHA important to both the employee and the employer?
2. What are some ways that labor and management can work together to ensure hazard-free workplaces?