

June 8, 2015

Dear Colleagues: Please see the attached summary charts of Cal/OSHA's compliance safety and health officer (CSHO) staffing in February and May 2015; the January 2015 analysis of the proposal to increase enforcement staffing over the next two years; and the May-June 2015 list of selected "OHS Resources to Share."

As you can see from the summary charts, field compliance officer staffing has dropped by five CSHOs since February, primarily due to ongoing retirements and re-assignments. In January 2015, the Department of Industrial Relations proposed a "Budget Change Proposal" (BCP) to increase compliance officer staffing by 26 field inspectors between July 2015 and June 2017.

There are two important but unanswered questions about the BCP hiring:

(1) Will the current 21 CSHO vacancies be back-filled? If so, will these be in addition to the 26 new hires, for a total of 47 new CSHOs for DOSH? Or, will the 21 back-fills be counted as part of the 26 new positions (as has happened before) for a net gain of only 5 new CSHOs between now and June 2017?

(2) How will these new hires be used? The text of the BCP indicated that the number of inspections that some CSHOs are expected to conduct annually will jump by nearly 50%. This raises the possibility of "numbers" or "production" pressures that could lead to abbreviated, "once-over-lightly" or "drive-by" inspections that will not capture and correct hazards on the workplaces. It would also mean the death of "health" inspections that require more time that are already few in number.

Lack of health inspections at the Federal and state plan levels is rising in visibility. The Washington, DC, PEER non-profit organization recently issued a press release on the issue announcing a data base of Fed OSHA health inspections, which can be accessed at: <http://www.peer.org/news/news-releases/silent-epidemic-of-workplace-chemical-exposures-rages-on.html>

The attached "OSHA Resource to Share" has links directly to several important media stories about workplace H&S, to new reports and studies on OHS issues, and to new Fed OSHA materials and guidelines.

Best to all,
Garrett Brown

Attachments:
May 2015 Summary Chart of CSHOs in the field
February 2015 Summary Chart of CSHOs in the field