

July Stats at DOSH: Crippling vacancies continue as Governor Newsom starts his second full fiscal year

July 27, 2020

July 2020 is basically unchanged from June – 53 vacancies of compliance safety and health officers (CSHO) for a rate of 21.5% -- and this month starts the second full fiscal year for the Governor with no plan in sight as to how to deal with the vacancies, lack of promotions, and gaping holes in leadership positions.

I am mystified as to why the Governor seems to be unconcerned about the deepening crisis at Cal/OSHA at a time when he has taken emergency action in other areas:

- Newsom's budget revisions for statewide fire-fighting includes \$130 million for cameras; \$25 million for other "new technology;" funding for another 174 permanent fire fighter positions; Cal/OSHA is actually NOT part of the state budget, the General Fund, but rather is self-financed, but the Governor seemingly will not use these fully-available resources to protect workers through resurrecting Cal/OSHA's field enforcement program;
- Newsom said he is planning to increase the number of contract tracers by shifting state and local employees to that task on an emergency basis. But the Governor has not been willing to overcome the roadblocks in the state human resources process that are prevent Cal/OSHA hiring and promotions, that are also within his purview to resolve; and
- Just last week the Governor said the state will now regularly test nursing home inspectors for Covid so as to protect the inspectors, nursing home residents and workers, and not cross-infect nursing homes. Newsom could make a similar plan for Cal/OSHA field personnel to restart a meaningful, robust enforcement program to protect workers in all sectors of the California economy.

It is either a huge blind-spot, or a deliberate decision, that the Governor does not want to bring Cal/OSHA back from the brink, and to play its role in enforcing state regulations and protecting California's 19 million workers.

Otherwise, the DOSH field enforcement staffing levels in July 2020 are:

Inspector vacancies ---

- 53 CSHO positions are vacant for a vacancy rate of 21.5%
- Fremont has 7 of 11 CSHO positions vacant (64%)
- Santa Ana has 6 of 12 positions vacant (50%) and no District Manager
- San Francisco has 3 of 7 positions vacant (43%)
- Region I (San Francisco Bay Area) has an overall CSHO vacancy rate of 36%
- Five CSHO positions have disappeared altogether from the Organization Charts since July 2019

Leadership vacancies ---

- There are two Regional Manager vacancies: the Region III Manager in Santa Ana, and the Region VI Manager supervising the High Hazard and LETF units.
- There are six District Offices without a District Manager: San Bernardino, Sacramento, Long Beach, LETF/Santa Ana, Santa Ana and Van Nuys.
- Region III (San Diego, Santa Ana, San Bernardino) has three of four District Manager positions vacant, and the Regional Manager position is also vacant.
- The Mining & Tunneling Unit (Region V) has two of three District Offices with manager vacancies, the training unit manager position is vacant, and the Regional Manager/Principal Safety Engineer position is vacant.

Cal/OSHA's inspector to worker ratio is now above 1 to 100,000 (1 to 101,598), compared to neighboring states of Washington (1 to 25,000) and Oregon (1 to 22,000).

No improvement, of course, on the language capacities with no hiring.

One thing to note is that the DIR PR office told the Los Angeles Times that there are 270 "authorized" field enforcement positions (not the 246 that appear on the DOSH Org Charts). I have no idea where these other 25 positions are located (if they exist at all), but they are not filled, so the vacancy rate would then be 28% (76 vacancies in 270 positions).

I hope that you and yours stay healthy – take good care.

Garrett Brown