

July 17, 2019

Cal/OSHA riddled with vacancies at start of new state fiscal year

Cal/OSHA field enforcement staffing levels sank further in July 2019 – the beginning of the new fiscal year and the first under a budget proposed by Governor Gavin Newsom.

The key take-aways from the July 2019 staffing levels are:

- An increasing number of vacancies in compliance safety and health officer (CSHO) positions – now 36 vacancies for a vacancy rate of almost 15% (14.3%).
- The regions with the highest numbers of vacancies are: Region I (Bay Area) with 14 positions open, and Region IV (Los Angeles) with 10 CSHO vacancies.
- The “freeze” or “slow down” in hiring for Cal/OSHA by the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) is having an impact on replacing the growing numbers of CSHOs who are retiring.
- In the last term of Gov. Jerry Brown, the Administration left unspent \$18.4 million in state resources for CSHO staffing that was authorized and approved by the Legislature. It is not clear what CSHO funding level was established in Gov. Newsom’s first budget, which started on July 1st, and if all of these resources are being spent.
- Cal/OSHA continues to have fewer field enforcement inspectors than there are Fish & Game Wardens in California; and the ratio of inspector to workers continues to be much less protective than Washington State, Oregon or even the 1980 Federal OSHA.
- Cal/OSHA has only 27 field inspectors that speak languages other than English for a labor force of 19+ million workers, with an estimated 20-25% of who were born outside the US and speak languages other than English.

The worst news is that there still has not been an appointment for the Director of DIR and the Chief of Cal/OSHA, now six months after Gov. Newsom was inaugurated. What the delay is and when these critical appointments will be made is not clear.

Best, Garrett Brown