

March 7, 2022

New Cal/OSHA Chief Facing Continuing Vacancies in Enforcement

I have been delayed in reporting recent Cal/OSHA staffing levels because the Public Information Office at DIR is withholding the data for more than 2 months after it is generated. So just last week (March 2022), I received the attached DIR List of authorized DOSH positions as of December 31, 2021. It appears that one motive for the delayed data release could be so the PIO can say “well, that’s old data, and things have changed in the last two months...”

This info delay might be something that OHS advocates might raise with the new DOSH Chief, Jeff Killip of Washington state, as it undermines claims of DIR/DOSH transparency and responsiveness.

DIR has published some data on enforcement staff hiring and vacancies:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/DOSH-Recruitment-Hiring.html>

Interestingly, the DIR chart states that the vacancy rate for compliance safety and health officers (CSHOs) on December 31, 2021, was 18% or 57 empty positions – which is inaccurate and unreliable. A position-by-position analysis of the attached December 31st organization charts for DOSH shows that the vacancy rate was 27.2% with 77 vacant positions.

In crunching the numbers, there is good news and bad news.

The good news is that:

- Hiring for field inspector positions has occurred. There was a net increase of 12 CSHOs between the end of September and the end of December. Reportedly, the hiring has continued in the first two months of 2022. We could confirm that if they would release the staffing data when compiled.
- The new industrial hygiene inspector positions have been added to the list of authorized CSHO positions. Most of them were vacant on January 1st, but it increased the number of authorized CSHO positions by 25 from the end of September to December 2021.
- The Legal unit has also added positions (to 35) and has done some hiring, although the new positions bring the vacancy rate up to 51% (18 vacant positions in 35 total) as of January 1st.

The bad news is that:

- The CSHO vacancy rate was 27.2% on January 1st – the highest yet under Governor Newsom – for 77 vacant positions out of 283 authorized CSHO positions.
- The functioning of the Division continues to be seriously undermined by critical vacancies in CSHO positions in hard-hit District Offices; manager vacancies (7 District

Offices with no District Manager); and among admin/clerical staff, who are vital for functional offices.

- Despite the hiring, no progress has been registered in adding field inspectors who speak languages other than English.
- The Consultation Service is still without the two top positions (Program Manager and Regional Manager) despite years of vacancies, and the vacancy rate for field consultants is 24%.

California continues to have a very low ratio of inspectors to workers – only 1 inspector for every 95,000 workers – which is much less protective than the ratios in Washington state (1:28,000) and Oregon (1:24,000).

Lots to talk about with the new DOSH Chief – but maybe Mr. Killip would be interested in bringing California's inspector ratio much closer to Washington state's (where he has been living).

Surely California workers deserve better than this...

Garrett Brown