

While at the 2022 National Safety Council Congress & Expo in September, Patrick Kapust, acting director of OSHA's Directorate of Enforcement Programs announced OSHA's preliminary Top 10 list of most frequently cited safety standards from fiscal year 2022 (Oct 1, 2021 – Sep 30, 2022).

INSIGHTS

Fall Protection and construction related standards dominate the list.

As usual, Fall Protection (1926.501) topped the list as it has for 12 years in a row, with Training Requirements for Fall Protection (1926.503) appearing later on the list. These standards are from OSHA's Construction Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) which make up half of the list, while the other half are from OSHA's General Industry CFR.

Construction workplaces are impacted by 4 of the 5 General Industry standards on the Top 10, with the lone "non-applicable" standard being Machine Guarding (1910.212), which could potentially be applied in some cases on a construction site.

Ladders (1926.1053) and Scaffolding (1926.451) remain in the top 5 since the 2019 list despite improvements in equipment technology.

COVID impacts linger for healthcare and other general industry employers

Respiratory Protection (1910.134) and Hazard Communication (1910.1200) also made their usual appearance but higher on the list in 2022, likely due to targeted and complaint-based inspections related to coronavirus. As those in healthcare recall, OSHA conducted a [three-month focused inspection initiative](#) in healthcare from March 9, 2022, to June 9, 2022.

The full preliminary FY2022 Top 10 is in order below:

1. Fall Protection – General Requirements (1926.501): 5,260 violations
2. Hazard Communication (1910.1200): 2,424
3. Respiratory Protection (1910.134): 2,185
4. Ladders (1926.1053): 2,143
5. Scaffolding (1926.451): 2,058
6. Lockout/Tagout (1910.147): 1,977
7. Powered Industrial Trucks (1910.178): 1,749
8. Fall Protection – Training Requirements (1926.503): 1,556
9. Personal Protective and Lifesaving Equipment – Eye and Face Protection (1926.102): 1,401
10. Machine Guarding (1910.212): 1,370

Same story since 2018

To find a lineup other than the top 10 since 2018, you'd have to go to 2017 when Electrical – Wiring Methods (1910.305) was the 10th most cited standard. That year, Personal Protective and Lifesaving Equipment (1926.102) was not on the list. Since 2018, the same ten standards have been slightly rearranged, usually due to increased enforcement efforts like the healthcare initiative explained above and other National Emphasis Programs.

Looking ahead

It's likely the Top 10 will remain unchanged in the coming year with COVID still in the picture and workplaces managing their Respiratory Protection and PPE programs. The construction industry could make a splash by knocking Fall Protection out of two places on the Top 10, but it seems to be a long shot with enforcement focused on the hazard and workers reaching new heights on towers, buildings, and other structures.

With many of the standards on the list relying on and relating to each other, it's more important than ever for training and resources to translate to correct use of equipment, and application of the concepts at the worker level. This sounds simple, but it involves functioning and effective systems of safety translated to actions taken by management, supervisors, and workers each day to prevent injury.

