OSHA Reform

ISSUE

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) works to improve the safety and health of American workers, but for too long, OSHA has viewed employers as adversaries to be policed and monitored by a myriad of restrictive and excessive regulations and penalties. ACEC believes that OSHA reform should focus on achieving a more productive workforce and fewer workplace injuries by promoting more effective and efficient approaches to safety and health.

OVERVIEW

Employers recognize that safety initiatives result in better employee morale, lower workers’ compensation costs, and fewer lost workdays. Even the most safety-conscious and injury-free employers are subject to unannounced OSHA inspections, the intent of which is to find violations of hopelessly complex regulations that often are difficult, if not impossible, to understand. For example, regulations concerning construction site safety are ill-defined and unclear when assigning responsibility. The 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act and the stacks of OSHA regulations issued under that law often needlessly burden employers with complex and expensive requirements that are of questionable value in improving workplace health and safety. Furthermore, businesses have even been penalized for good faith efforts at providing safety programs and policies for their employees.

Excessive and unnecessary regulation does not enhance safety for America’s workers. OSHA must fully take into account the costs and benefits of the regulations they seek to impose to help ensure that federal and private resources go toward efforts that actually improve safety. Also, voluntary efforts should be encouraged to improve safety and health in the workplace.