



THE INSIDER

OSHA IS WATCHING YOU!

HOUSING COMMUNITIES are also workplaces. From conducting maintenance operations, to cleaning common areas, to mowing grass, to removing snow, they're fraught with potential employee accidents everyday. They need workplace safety standards.

That's where OSHA comes in. Passed into law in 1970, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration sets standards to eliminate or reduce workplace accidents. By complying with OSHA requirements, you can minimize the risks to which your employees are exposed - and save thousands of dollars in fines and litigation. The OSHA standards most relevant to housing communities are found in Article 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910: Hazard Communication (HAZ-COM). This is the most important safety regulation for communities. It defines a safety plan for communities and contractors and is one of the first items an OSHA inspector evaluates. Designate a HAZ-COM coordinator to be responsible for staff training and program implementation.

HAZ-COM Training

An integral part of a HAZ_COM program is training employees to handle swimming-pool chemicals, cleaning products, solvents, paints and pesticides.

Electrical and Energy System Lockouts

This is intended to prevent injuries from electrical or any other confined energy sources while employees are servicing your equipment. Required tags and/or lockout devices guard against electric breakers or a valve being turning on while work is performed.

HAZ-CO Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDA)

Suppliers of potentially hazardous chemicals, from window cleaner to sulfuric acid, must provide you with an MSDS for each product. An MSDS contains information about product ingredients, potential health risks, and recommended first-aid procedures to treat chemical contact. Alphabetize your MSDS sheets in a special notebook according to the chemical name, and update the information as necessary.

When you hire a service provider, you must take steps to protect both its and your own employees. For example, if you hire a custodial firm to clean your common areas, you must request a copy of the firm's HAZ-COM program and ensure that MSDS sheets for chemicals used by its workers are available for your employees to review.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)

You must supply the required PPE for protecting heads, hands, arms, feet, ears, eyes, faces when employees work with certain chemicals or equipment. You're also required to perform a hazard assessment on each employee's workplace, and have your employees trained in the proper use and care of the PPE they're assigned.

Asbestos

In 1995, OSHA established tough safety standards for employees working with or near asbestos in buildings built before 1981. Under the rule, OSHA presumes that certain materials contain asbestos and requires building owners-including associations to notify contractors, employees, tenants, and new owners about its presence.

OSHA also requires communities to establish and identify "regulated areas" and restrict access to employees with protective equipment and clothing. You must also post warning signs in areas with asbestos (the regulations state the specific wording of these signs).

Working Assets

This might seem overwhelming, but realize that OSHA's goal is not to levy fines but rather to provide safe work environments.

By complying with OSHA standards, detecting potential hazards, and finding sound solutions, you'll protect some of your greatest assets-your employees. And safe workers are better workers.

Happy Holidays!

December. 2005

Current News...

Midwest Management Named Property Management Company Of The Year

Midwest Management was presented with eight Glstar Awards for excellence in the multi-family housing industry. Glstar the highly recognized industry award is presented annually by the Property Management Association of Michigan (PMAM) as tribute to individuals and groups that have contributed to the progress in the multi-family housing industry of Michigan.

Midwest Management received Glstar Awards for the following:

Management Company of the Year - Midwest Management Company

Best Brochure (1-150 units) - Villa Bella of Clinton Township

Best Decorated Model (1-150 units) - All Seasons of Rochester Hills

Best Decorated Model (151-300 units) - Independence Village of Frankenmuth

Best Curb Appeal (151-300 units) - Pendleton Park of New Hudson

Outstanding Leasing Consultant of the Year (1-150 units) - Carolyn Pelland, Independence Village of White Lake

Outstanding Maintenance Person of the Year (1-150 units) - John Lipka, Town Commons of Howell

Employee Retention - Fox Glen of Saginaw



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