

AMERICAN WIRE PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

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AWPA Chair, Environment, Health and Safety Committee**

Coffee and Conversation with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Loren Sweatt, OSHA

After brief introductions, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt started the conversation with acknowledgement of the 50th Anniversary of the OSHA Act. She stated that OSHA has been very active in these uncertain times. She mentioned the effort on rulemaking such as the final Beryllium Rules and the fine tuning of issues like Crane & Derrick around Railroads. While many operations have changed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, inspections and complaint investigations have continued. Recent results are all available on the OSHA web site.

The Department is looking for a good faith effort when looking at OSHA violations—such as items like annual audiometric test, annual respirator PFT profit test, and even annual refresher training. These and other items are reviewed carefully before citations are issued. Insert 50 year statements next as Sweatt reviewed the current status of OSHA with the Covid-19 complaints fitted into the new norm-- working from home, protecting employees, and still providing coverage to the workers of this country.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt covered Covid-19 information that is on the OSHA.gov web site with many of the documents available in multiple languages to help spread the word of prevention, precautions, and best practices. This is a joint effort between OSHA and the CDC. With over 10,000 worker complaints about Covid-19 safety in workplace, it has taken a major effort to respond in an appropriate and timely manner. Most of these complaints have been resolved.

The concern of the group was mostly about the reporting and record ability of Covid-19 cases. Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt indicated that several directions and letters of interpretation could be found on the web site, as well as, the frequently asked questions on Covid-19 that is being worked on at this time.

OSHA is also working on communicating information about industrial face coverings during the pandemic. Some workers require FR material, and most face coverings are not made of this type of material. Likewise, the use of an industrial respirator is very different than the surgical mask used by health care workers. Thus, there is a need to train workers on the correct face covering to use.

In summary, employers need to follow as close as possible CDC guide lines including -barriers, social distance, cleaning basic hygiene, and face coverings, as

needed. Best practice is also to have a leave policy in place that tells workers “Not to Work Sick.”

As with any type of hazard event (hurricane, tornado, snow, ice, wild fire or pandemic), it is best to have a plan/policy in place and workers trained in their role in that emergency.

A new “10 Step” poster is available to download from the OSHA web site as are many other useful tools of this nature.

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt related that there are some general rules for both recording and reporting Covid-19 work related cases. If in doubt, call your local area office. Each case is different. If general guidelines don’t answer “do I or don’t I” report/record, please call.

The observations and notes were taken from both the National Association of Manufacturers and the Steel Manufacturers Association video conferences with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Sweatt. The NAM event was attended by about 120, and the SMA event had over 40 attend. In both, the same issues seemed to be on industry leaders’ minds, and OSHA is taking steps to provide useful information that can address these concerns. I

I would like to thank both Associations for arranging these events and allowing us to attend.