



PREPARING FOR AN OSHA INSPECTION

Recently, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced that it will be conducting unannounced comprehensive safety and health inspections on nursing homes and personal care facilities in the coming months. OSHA visits will focus on resident handling, blood borne pathogens, tuberculosis, and slips, trips, and falls.

One way to prepare your facility for a potential inspection is to ensure that you have an effective safety program that

- ❑ Determines the immediate needs of the facility;
- ❑ Places a priority on issues that are causing injury;
- ❑ Conducts an analysis of incidents;
- ❑ Determines the best course of action;
- ❑ Conducts training;
- ❑ Implements the plan of action; and
- ❑ Reviews and make changes as necessary.

Example

Recently, a 100-bed Midwest nursing home implemented these tips into their existing safety program, with amazing results. Here is what they did:

- The safety committee members identified two major areas of concern: their workers' compensation costs averaged \$140,000 per year and their CNA annual turnover rate was 55 percent.
- Of particular concern was a back injury suffered by a CNA that cost \$240,000 in workers' compensation expenses.
- The committee asked 30 CNAs to examine the tasks of moving and repositioning residents and then provide feedback. They determined that manually lifting residents was a serious problem in their facility. The CNAs refused to use the mechanical lifts because they were outdated and time-consuming.

- During the following month, the committee brought in different lifts and asked the CNAs to evaluate each and select the best one. When the CNAs complained that the lifts took too much time, a committee member conducted a time study. She found that the lift took 5 minutes, whereas, it took the CNAs upwards of 15 minutes to find a partner to assist with manually lifting residents.
- The facility purchased the selected lifts, provided training, placed manuals in accessible areas, and implemented future training into their orientation program.
- The committee members made sure the new mechanical lifts were accessible to the staff and solicited their feedback after use.
- When the committee audited their new lifting program, they found that most of the CNAs adapted to the new lifts and actually refused to use any other lifting techniques. Over time, they found that their average workers' compensation costs decreased to \$4,000 per year; and they estimated a savings of more than \$125,000 in turnover costs. In addition, only six new hires were needed in the following year!

As you can see, by doing a little research and involving the staff, this facility made changes that saved them a great deal of money. These types of programs will surely be evaluated in OSHA inspections, and we encourage you to implement the above tips to prepare for a potential OSHA visit.

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