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OSHA's Final Rule to Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 4, 2017) - The new rule, which takes effect January 1, 2017, requires certain employers to electronically submit injury and illness data that they are already required to record on their onsite OSHA Injury and Illness forms. Analysis of this data will enable OSHA to use its enforcement and compliance assistance resources more efficiently. Some of the data will also be posted to the OSHA website. OSHA believes that public disclosure will encourage employers to improve workplace safety and provide valuable information to workers, job seekers, customers, researchers and the general public. The amount of data submitted will vary depending on the size of company and type of industry.

OSHA will provide a secure website that offers three options for data submission:

- First, users will be able to manually enter data into a web form.
- Second, users will be able to upload a CSV file to process single or multiple establishments at the same time.
- Last, users of automated recordkeeping systems will have the ability to transmit data electronically via an API (application programming interface). The site is scheduled to go live in February 2017.

The new reporting requirements will be phased in over two years:

- Establishments with 250 or more employees in industries covered by the recordkeeping regulation must submit information from their 2016 Form 300A by July 1, 2017. These same employers will be required to submit information from all 2017 forms (300A, 300, and 301) by July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019 and every year thereafter, the information must be submitted by March 2.
- Establishments with 20-249 employees in [certain high-risk industries](#) must submit information from their 2016 Form 300A by July 1, 2017, and their 2017 Form 300A by July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019 and every year thereafter, the information must be submitted by March 2.

More Information:

<https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/>

OSHA's Final Rule to Lower Beryllium Levels at the Workplace

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 6, 2017) - A new rule issued on January 6, 2017 by OSHA dramatically lowers workplace exposure to beryllium, a strategically important material that can cause devastating lung diseases. The new beryllium standards for general industry, construction and shipyards will require employers to take additional, practical measures to protect an estimated 62,000 workers from these serious risks. The final rule becomes effective on March 10, 2017.

Beryllium is a strong, lightweight metal used in the aerospace, electronics, energy, telecommunication, medical and defense industries. However, it is highly toxic when beryllium-containing materials are processed in a way that releases airborne beryllium dust, fume, or mist into the workplace air that can be then inhaled by workers, potentially damaging their lungs. Recent scientific evidence shows that low-level exposures to beryllium can cause serious lung disease.

The final rule will reduce the eight-hour permissible exposure limit from the previous level of 2.0 micrograms per cubic meter to 0.2 micrograms per cubic meter. Above that level, employers must take steps to reduce the airborne concentration of beryllium. The rule requires additional protections, including personal protective equipment, medical exams, other medical surveillance and training, as well. It also establishes a short-term exposure limit of 2.0 micrograms per cubic meter over a 15-minute sampling period.

More Information:

<https://www.osha.gov/pls/>

Republican Statesmen Propose Replacing Obama's Climate Policies with a Carbon Tax

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb. 8, 2017) - Representatives from a coalition of veteran Republican officials met on February 8, 2017 with White House officials to discuss the idea of imposing a national carbon tax, rather than using federal regulations, to address climate change.

The newly formed Climate Leadership Council — which includes James A. Baker, Henry Paulson, George P. Shultz, Marty Feldstein and Greg Mankiw — is proposing elimination of nearly all of the Obama administration's climate policies in exchange for a rising carbon tax that starts at \$40 per ton, and is returned in the form of a quarterly check from the Social Security Administration to every American. Baker and his colleagues estimate that the average family of four would receive \$2,000 annually in dividends from the fee if it starts at \$40 per ton, and as the tax rises, so would their dividends. This would naturally create a constituency for ever-tougher climate change action.

A carbon tax is quintessentially conservative, Baker's group argues, because it would not increase the size of government but would reduce it by canceling out President Barack Obama's climate regulatory moves. Revenue from the carbon tax would go directly to taxpayers instead of toward new government programs.

More Information:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/>

Renewable Energy Continues to Beat Fossil Fuels

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Feb. 8, 2017) - Clean energy grew at a record pace as the United States added 22GW of capacity — the equivalent of 11 Hoover Dams — to the grid from renewable sources last year, significantly trumping new fossil fuel additions, according to a new report.

The report from Bloomberg New Energy Finance (BNEF) and the Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) cites the declining cost of wind and solar power, largely due to advances in technology, as prime reasons for the rapid adoption of renewables. The cost of building large utility-scale solar photovoltaic power plants for example has been fallen by 50% in just five years.

Renewable energy companies have also benefited from the quick decline in coal power that has resulted from a combination of factors including stiff competition from cheap natural gas and environmental regulation. Coal-fired power plants now provide only 30% of the country's electricity compared with nearly half of the supply in 2008.

More Information:

<http://time.com/>

EPA Report Shows Air Emissions of Toxic Chemicals Down More Than Half Since 2005

WASHINGTON, D.C. (Jan. 12, 2017) - The USEPA released on January 12, 2017 its annual Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) National Analysis, which shows releases of toxic chemicals into the air fell 56% from 2005-2015 at industrial facilities submitting data to the TRI program.

The report shows an 8% decrease from 2014 to 2015 at facilities reporting to the program contributed to this ten-year decline. Hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid, toluene and mercury were among chemicals with significantly lower air releases at TRI-covered facilities. Medical professionals have associated these toxic air pollutants with health effects that include damage to developing nervous systems and respiratory irritation.

Combined hydrochloric acid and sulfuric acid air releases fell more than 566 million pounds, mercury more than 76,000 pounds, and toluene more than 32 million pounds at TRI-covered facilities. Coal- and oil-fired electric utilities accounted for more than 90% of nationwide reductions in air releases of hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid and mercury from 2005 to 2015 in facilities reporting to the program. This trend is helping protect millions of families and children from these harmful pollutants. Reasons for these reductions include a shift from coal to other fuel sources, the installation of control technologies, and implementation of environmental regulations.

[2015 TRI National Analysis, including local data and analyses:](#)

www.epa.gov/trinationalanalysis