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OSHA's Top 10 Most-Cited Violations

The same ten hazards show up year after year. Here's what inspectors are writing up — and what we do about it on our sites.

Preliminary FY2026 data announced by OSHA and the National Safety Council, Sept. 15, 2026
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Fall Protection — General Requirements



4,041

FY2026 citations

5,914 in FY2025 · Unchanged
from FY2025

WHAT GETS CITED

Unprotected edges, holes, and roof work above 6 feet without guardrails, nets, or a personal fall arrest system.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Leading edges and floor/roof openings left open
- Anchor points missing or not rated for 5,000 lb
- Harness worn but lanyard never clipped in

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Cover or guard every hole the moment it's made
- Tie off 100% of the time above 6 ft
- Inspect harness and lanyard before every use

Hazard Communication



1,961

FY2026 citations

2,546 in FY2025 · Unchanged
from FY2025

WHAT GETS CITED

Chemicals on site without labels, safety data sheets, or a written program workers can actually reach.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Secondary containers with no label
- SDS binder out of date or locked in an office
- New hires never trained on the chemicals they use

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Label every container, including spray bottles
- Keep SDS accessible on every shift
- Train before a worker first handles a chemical

Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout)



1,863

FY2026 citations

2,177 in FY2025 · Up 1 from #4

WHAT GETS CITED

Equipment serviced without isolating and locking out stored electrical, hydraulic, or mechanical energy.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- No written procedure for the specific machine
- Shared or missing personal locks
- Stored pressure or gravity energy not released

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- One worker, one lock, one key
- Verify zero energy before you put hands in
- Audit LOTO procedures annually per machine

Scaffolding



1,725

FY2026 citations

1,905 in FY2025 · Up 3 from #7

WHAT GETS CITED

Scaffolds built, moved, or used without proper planking, access, guardrails, or competent-person inspection.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Climbing cross-braces instead of a ladder
- Gaps in planking or missing toe boards
- No inspection tag before the shift

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Competent person inspects before each shift
- Full planking, guardrails above 10 ft
- Keep base plates and mudsills level and secure

Ladders



1,659

FY2026 citations

2,405 in FY2025 · Down 2 from #3

WHAT GETS CITED

Damaged ladders, wrong ladder for the job, or ladders used at unsafe angles and without extension above the landing.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Top step used as a step
- Side rails not extending 3 ft above landing
- Broken rungs still in service

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- 4-to-1 angle; secure top and bottom
- Maintain three points of contact
- Tag and remove damaged ladders same day

Respiratory Protection



1,608

FY2026 citations

1,953 in FY2025 · Down 1 from
#5

WHAT GETS CITED

Respirators issued without a written program, medical evaluation, fit testing, or cartridge change schedule.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- No annual fit test on record
- Facial hair breaking the seal
- Cartridges used past their change-out schedule

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Medical evaluation before first use
- Annual fit test on the exact model worn
- Seal check every single time it goes on

Powered Industrial Trucks



1,379

FY2026 citations

1,826 in FY2025 · Up 1 from #8

WHAT GETS CITED

Forklifts operated by untrained or unevaluated drivers, or kept in service with known defects.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- No 3-year operator re-evaluation
- Daily pre-shift inspection skipped
- Pedestrians walking through travel lanes

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Train, evaluate, and document every operator
- Pre-shift inspection before the first lift
- Separate pedestrian and truck traffic

Fall Protection — Training Requirements



1,273

FY2026 citations

1,907 in FY2025 · Down 2 from #6

WHAT GETS CITED

Workers exposed to fall hazards without documented training from a competent person.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- No training records on file
- Training given once at hire and never refreshed
- Equipment changed but training didn't

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Train before exposure, not after
- Retrain when the site, gear, or role changes
- Keep signed records on site for inspection

Eye and Face Protection



1,120

FY2026 citations

1,665 in FY2025 · Unchanged
from FY2025

WHAT GETS CITED

Missing or wrong eye and face protection for grinding, cutting, chipping, welding, and chemical splash work.

WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Safety glasses without side shields
- No face shield over glasses when grinding
- Wrong shade lens for the welding process

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- Match the protection to the specific hazard
- Face shield plus primary protection when grinding
- Keep eyewash stations clear and tested

Machine Guarding



1,072

FY2026 citations

1,239 in FY2025 · Unchanged
from FY2025

WHAT GETS CITED

Points of operation, nip points, and rotating parts left exposed, or guards removed and not replaced.

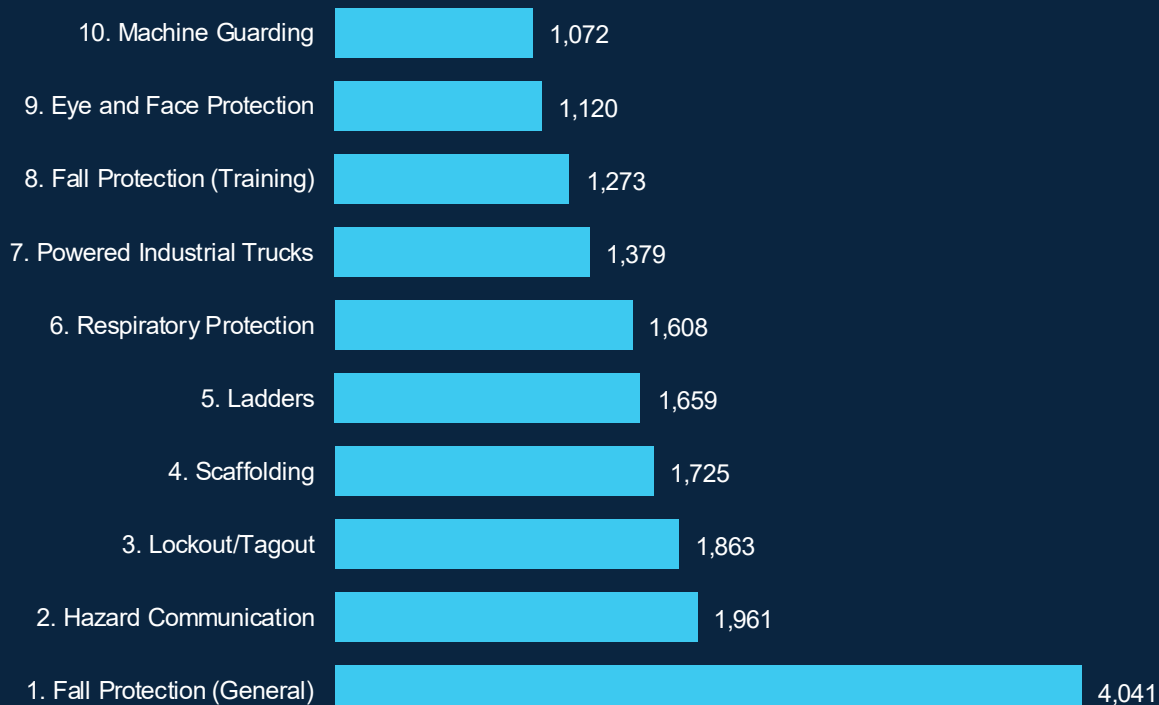
WHAT INSPECTORS FIND

- Guard removed for a quick job and left off
- Anchoring missing on fixed machines
- Bypassed interlocks or safety switches

WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT

- No guard, no run — full stop
- Replace the guard before the machine restarts
- Never bypass an interlock for speed

The FY2026 Top 10, in one view



4,041

Fall protection citations — #1 for the 16th straight year

17,701

Total citations across all ten standards

10 of 10

Categories cited less than last year — progress, not a finish line

Four habits that keep us off this list

Falls are still the whole ballgame

Fall protection and fall training together account for 5,314 citations — 30% of the Top 10. Tie off, guard the hole, train first.

Paperwork is a hazard control

HazCom, LOTO, respirator, and forklift citations are mostly missing programs, records, and evaluations. If it isn't documented, it isn't done.

Pre-use inspection catches most of it

Ladders, scaffolds, forklifts, and harnesses all fail the same way — nobody looked before they used it. Sixty seconds, every shift.

Speak up before the guard comes off

Every citation started as a shortcut somebody saw. Stop-work authority applies to all of us, on every job, with no blowback.