

DETROIT NATIVE SUN

Enlightening the Community

Ten employers cited in latest round of COVID-19 workplace safety violations

As the state continues to prioritize worker safety and health, the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) inspected and issued COVID-19 emergency rule or general duty citations to ten different workplaces with violations for failing to protect workers and take safety precautions.

Under MIOSHA's Emergency Rules, businesses that resume in-person work must, among other things, have a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan and provide thorough training to their employees that covers, at a minimum, workplace infection-control practices, the proper use of personal protection equipment (PPE), and steps workers must take to notify the business or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19. An emergency rule citation carries a fine of up to \$7,000.

The MIOSHA general duty clause requires an employer to provide a workplace that is free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee. A general duty clause citation carries a fine of up to \$7,000.

On-site inspections conducted by MIOSHA's general industry and construction industry enforcement divisions determined ten employers allegedly committed violations by failing to implement necessary precautions to protect employees from contracting COVID-19. Deficiencies included a lack of health screenings, face coverings, employee training, and overall preparedness plans.

The cited employers have 15 working days from receipt of the MIOSHA citations to contest the violations and penalties. Employers must provide proof to MIOSHA that abatement has been completed.

A cited employer may choose to enter into a Penalty Reduction Agreement with MIOSHA and agree to abate noted hazards by the abatement date provided within the citation and will receive a 50% reduction in penalties. By entering into the Agreement an employer must also agree to not seek an appeal.

The latest MIOSHA citations were issued to the below companies for the following issues:

- COVID-19 Emergency Rules Citations
- Tri-Unity Christian School of Wyoming, MI, was cited for two serious violations and two other-than-serious violations, specifically failing to conduct the daily health screening including a questionnaire, failure to require face coverings when social distancing could not be maintained, failure to place posters in the workplace that encourages staying away from work when sick, and failing to maintain or retain documentation for training and entry screening. Total penalties are \$2,000. The inspection was initiated based on an employee representative complaint, view full citation document.
- BC&F Tool Company Inc. in Oak Park, MI, was cited but not fined for not developing a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. The inspection was initiated in response to an employee complaint, view full citation document.
- United Resin Corporation in Royal Oak, MI, was cited but not fined for not developing a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. The inspection was initiated in response to an employee complaint, view the full citation document.
- Commercial Fabricating & Engineering in Highland, MI was cited but not fined for not developing a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. The employer was found in violation of other non-COVID-19 workplace safety regulations

which resulted in \$14,700 in total penalties. The inspection was initiated as a reinspection assignment, view the full citation document.

- AIS Automation Systems Inc. in Rockwood, MI was cited but not fined for not developing a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. The inspection was initiated in response to an employee complaint, view the full citation document.
- Michigan Die Casting in Dowagiac, MI, was cited for violations including a lack of a COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, failure to train employees on the workplace controls for COVID-19, failure to implement a self-screening protocol for COVID-19, a lack of increased cleaning or disinfecting of the facility, not providing face coverings, and not enforcing the use of face coverings. Total penalties are \$16,800. The inspection was initiated from an employee complaint, view the full citation document.
- F.J. Manufacturing Co., Inc. in Madison Heights, MI was cited but not fined for not developing a written COVID-19 preparedness and response plan. The inspection was initiated as a programmed inspection assignment, view the full citation document.
- General Duty Citations
- Powerhouse Gym Troy Inc. in Troy, MI, was cited for the lack of a preparedness and response plan, failing to conduct the daily health screening including a questionnaire and failure to require face coverings when social distancing could not be maintained. Total penalties are \$700. The inspection was initiated in response to a referral, view full citation document.
- K2 Holdings LLC in Fenton, MI, was cited for violations including failing to train employees on COVID-19, failing to conduct the daily health screening including a questionnaire, failing to require face coverings when social distancing could not be maintained and failure to use signs, tape marks, or other visual cues where people (workers, customers, and visitors) are to stand. Total penalties are \$2,100. The inspection was initiated in response to an employee complaint, view full citation document.
- Plastic Development Group LLC in Southfield, MI, was fined \$2,100 for violations including the lack of a preparedness and response plan, failing to conduct the daily health screening including a questionnaire and failure to require face coverings when social distancing could not be maintained. The inspection was initiated in response to an employee complaint, view full citation document.

A complete list of MIOSHA COVID-19 workplace safety citations is available online. Visit Michigan.gov/COVIDWorkplaceSafety for employee and customer factsheets, educational videos, a sample COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, best practices that employees need to follow and a reopening checklist to help businesses put safeguards in place.

To request free consultation assistance from MIOSHA's Consultation Education and Training Division, go to MIOSHA Request for Consultative Assistance

For more information about MIOSHA's safety and health guidelines to protect Michigan's workforce during the pandemic, employers and employees with questions regarding workplace safety and health may contact MIOSHA using the new hotline at 855-SAFE-C19 (855-723-3219).

To report health and safety concerns in the workplace, go to Michigan.gov/MIOSHAc COMPLAINT.

Three tips to own your financial outcome

(StatePoint) 2020 was more than just a health crisis, it had ripple effects on nearly every aspect of our lives, including our long-term financial plans.

"If you are nearing your retirement years, the events of this past year may have been especially concerning, and if you are rethinking your retirement plans altogether in light of 2020, you're not alone," says John Kennedy, head of Retirement Solutions Distribution at Lincoln Financial Group. "The good news is that with some smart steps and proper planning, you can set yourself up to feel more in control of your finances in the year ahead and for years to come."

Kennedy offers the following tips to pandemic-proof and own your financial outcome in 2021:

1. Talk with a financial professional. If you're not already, consider talking to a financial professional about your goals, roadblocks and concerns, especially given today's circumstances. Lincoln's research shows that nearly a third of Americans agree that now is a good time to talk with one. They are well-positioned to help you consider a broad range of solutions that

best address your individual needs and situation.

2. Protect your income. Your advisor may suggest diversifying your portfolio to include an annuity, which is a financial product that can provide you with protected income in retirement. Solutions like an annuity can help you feel better prepared to navigate volatility, protect the retirement savings you've worked hard for, as well as provide a legacy for loved ones.

"With annuities, you have options for both protected growth and income that can help you feel more secure that you can maintain your lifestyle in a down market," added Kennedy.

3. Stay the course. New research shows that an unpredictable market concerns more people than actual investment losses. But while market twists and turns may take you for a ride, it's important to resist the temptation to jump off altogether. By proofing your portfolio to weather market ups and downs, you can guard against market losses, while keeping your money invested for growth.

For more resources and tips, visit www.lfg.com.



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