

OSHA News Release

2009 - 07/31/2009 - U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA focuses inspection program on safety of airport traffic control tower personnel

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U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA focuses inspection program on safety of airport traffic control tower personnel

WASHINGTON - The safety of airport traffic control tower personnel is the focus of an inspection targeting program titled "Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Traffic Control Tower Monitoring Program," which monitors how workers clear a control tower in case of fire and other emergencies. The inspection targeting program, conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), examines the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) air traffic control towers' provision of safe means of egress, or exit, for workers at FAA-owned and -operated towers.

The program requires the FAA to bring towers into compliance with the alternate standard for egress and fire safety. OSHA inspectors will inspect randomly selected towers to determine if the FAA is meeting this requirement. A description of OSHA's alternate standard is available at http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10114.

Current guidance based on the FAA's alternate standard allows for a single exit route where the building size, occupancy level, type of construction and workplace arrangement is such that all workers would be able to evacuate safely during an emergency.

"This agency's fundamental responsibility is to protect workers from unsafe workplaces," said acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Jordan Barab. "Those who work in airport traffic control towers risk their safety if exit routes are not in place in the event of a fire. OSHA recognizes the importance of this inspection program and is confident that monitoring compliance with this standard will result in fewer worker injuries and deaths."

The standard also includes requirements such as incorporating fire detection and alarm systems, fire suppression equipment and emergency action plans. The standard currently covers 386 towers, of which 190 have been certified by the FAA as being in compliance.

For information on the inspection targeting program, visit http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/Directive_pdf/FAP_01-00-005.pdf.