

LEGAL UPDATE

OSHA Launches New National Emphasis Program for Warehouse and Distribution Center Hazards

On July 13, 2023, OSHA launched a [National Emphasis Program](#) (NEP) to prevent workplace hazards in warehousing and distribution center operations, mail/postal processing and distribution centers, parcel delivery/courier services and certain high-injury-rate retail establishments. The NEP is expected to expire in July 2026.



IMPORTANT DATES

July 13, 2023

Effective date for the NEP for warehouse and distribution centers.

July 2026

Expected expiration date for this warehouse and distribution center NEP.

NEP Overview

Under this three-year NEP, OSHA will conduct comprehensive safety inspections focused on hazards related to:

- Powered industrial vehicle operations;
- Material handling and storage;
- Walking and working surfaces;
- Means of egress; and
- Fire protection.

For retail establishments with high injury rates, the program will also focus on storage and loading areas.

However, OSHA has the authority to expand the scope of any inspection when evidence shows that violations may exist in other areas of the establishment, particularly if heat, ergonomic and other health hazards are present.

Inspected establishments will be chosen from two lists. One list includes establishments with industry codes covered under this emphasis program. The second list consists of a limited number of retail establishments with the highest rates of injuries and illnesses resulting in days away, restricted duty or job transfer.

State plans are required to adopt this emphasis program or establish a different program that is at least as effective as the federal model.

Employer Next Steps

Warehouses and distribution centers should familiarize themselves with the NEP to understand what inspectors will be looking for. Employers are encouraged to implement and review their policies and procedures to ensure compliance with OSHA regulations.