

Letter from the Director: OSHA Regulations Bring Increased Relevance

Just from the title, I presume you have already slid to the edge of your seat or crossed your arms in frustration or defiance for what you might read in this letter. After all, in the marketplace there are more real cases now than ever before of contractors and projects impacted by the increased attention OSHA has given to this industry.

Consider this for a moment, however: all reputable contractors realize the most valuable resource and number-one capital investment of their business is the workforce. Labor management is really what your company is about and it likely always has been. The rare exception is the owner/operator, one- or two-man crew that is able to still get by on talent and reliance on equipment and technology. And yet, even you—owner/operator, one- or two-man crew—are your own most valuable resource.

Therefore, what is the biggest concern when it comes to regulations that are designed to do one thing, to keep your most valuable resource safe and in excellent working condition? The reality is that, given best intent (which I know is arguable), OSHA and the research committees that feed their decision-making do not have the time, resources or expertise to truly understand the nature of your work and determine the best ways to regulate safety—or do they? The CFA is currently working hard to answer this question and to provide assistance for all companies in the foundation construction business.

OSHA regulations are all about an employer's duty to create and maintain safe working conditions, no matter the cost. If

you have just invested a large amount of money in the newest piece of equipment (e.g. a concrete pump) or the latest technology (e.g. robotic layout station), are you not willing to spend extra time protecting, cleaning and preparing every precaution to keep that investment in top shape for as long as possible? This is what understanding OSHA regulations is all about. It is not picking your way through a list of options for the quickest way to comply or ignoring regulations on the assumption that you understand your business better.

In the past two months, we have received an increased number of communications for member companies being impacted by OSHA site visits. Citations are being issued for excavation, fall protection, PPE, awareness, on-site management and much more. Silica has yet to be cited but we expect it to be in the conversation soon. Your best course of action to take as soon as possible is to thoroughly review your safety plans, introductions, maintenance and education. There are safety consultants we can introduce you to and, most importantly, CFA members have access to our complimentary preparation resources, review and prevention services.

Accidents will happen to even the most prepared company. However, anticipating and minimizing the nature of a potential accident and preparing for the consequences is our responsibility. We know your business and are intent on helping OSHA know it even more (i.e. alliance for the same common goal), and we want to help you succeed at protecting what we can all agree needs to be protected.



CFA Executive Director, James Baty | jbaty@cfawalls.org