



# Executive Order #511 Establishing the Massachusetts Employee Safety and Health Advisory Committee

*On April 27, 2009, Governor Deval L. Patrick signed Executive Order #511, "Establishing the Massachusetts Employee Safety and Health Advisory Committee." EO 511 calls for the creation of an infrastructure that will allow for on-going assessment and improvement of health and safety conditions for Commonwealth employees on the job. The cornerstone of this health and safety infrastructure is the creation of joint labor-management health and safety committees to cover all employees in agencies of the Commonwealth's executive branch. These committees will conduct an assessment of health and safety systems in place for certain serious worker health and safety hazards. This will generate a big picture understanding of where we currently stand with worker health and safety across the executive branch, and will serve to inform the efforts of the new Governor's Advisory Committee in identifying effective and practical strategies and initiatives to improve the safety and health of our Commonwealth's employees.*

## Key EO 511 Initiatives

### **Creation of a centralized health and safety infrastructure**

Designed to aid in gaining a big picture view of current health and safety management so that centralized strategies for improvement can be developed. This will also allow for dissemination of health and safety information, support, and assistance resources throughout all agencies. The infrastructure consists of:

- The Governor's Massachusetts Employee Safety and Health Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee), created by EO 511.
- Appointment of a Health and Safety coordinator for each secretariat.
- Creation of joint labor-management health and safety committees to cover all employees in the executive branch. (In some agencies, these committees were already in existence so they were brought into the process).

### **Assessment of current health and safety management practices**

Designed to give a big picture view of health and safety management across the entire executive branch, and guide development of effective strategies for moving this issue forward at the central level. The assessment, completed by the health and safety committees, consists of:

- Completion of hazard assessment questionnaires: these evaluate the current status of health and safety management for a set of serious worker hazards: work zone safety, chemical hazards, confined space entry, driving safety, emergency action planning, electrical hazards, fall from height, lockout/tagout, trench safety, workplace and domestic violence and life safety.
- Completion of a gap analysis: this is a comparison of what is currently in place for protection against each serious hazard (as answered on the hazard assessment questionnaire) to the relevant worker protection standard, as well as health and safety management ideals.

### **Identification of effective and realistic next steps to improve state worker health and safety**

The Advisory Committee will develop recommendations primarily based on the following:

- Review of worker injury and illness statistics.
- Review of information developed by the health and safety committees.

**Creation of centralized access to resources such as model health and safety policies, inter-agency peer-to-peer support, training, and sharing of innovative and effective health and safety strategies.**

### **Collection of injury and illness statistics for State Employees**

- Ensuring that state agencies collect and report work-related injury and illness data comparable to the OSHA requirements for private sector employers.
- Requiring participation for agencies selected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Does this mean state employees are now covered by OSHA standards?**

EO 511 does not change the fact that state employees are not covered by OSHA standards. EO 511 is taking an important step for state worker safety and health by conducting a comprehensive assessment of where things currently stand before identifying the specific next steps needed to make improvements.

### **Our agency already has measures in place to protect the health and safety of our employees. Does this mean we do not need to participate in EO 511?**

All Executive Branch agencies, regardless of where they currently stand with employee health and safety, must participate. We are creating a connected and centralized health and safety infrastructure, and will then work to assess current realities, which may range from little in place to comprehensive management of this issue. Those agencies who are well ahead can also serve in a leadership role. Part of the EO 511 process includes integrating successful and innovate health and safety management strategies and policies and making them available to all of the health and safety committees.

### **What are the benefits of devoting valuable staff time to this effort?**

- Becoming part of the centralized health and safety infrastructure, which links your secretariat to worker health and safety programs, information, and resources.
- Providing input on the experience of your agencies to the central worker protection policy development effort.
- Gaining valuable internal information on current worker health and safety management.
- Training provided to staff about elements of a sustainable and effective health and safety management system.
- Receiving information on injury and illness statistics and costs for your secretariat/agencies to help you target prevention efforts.

### **How do I find out more/get in touch with my health and safety committee?**

Contact Hilary Hackbart at the Workplace Safety and Health Program in the Department of Labor Standards, 978-242-1354 or [hilary.hackbart@state.ma.us](mailto:hilary.hackbart@state.ma.us).



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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
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