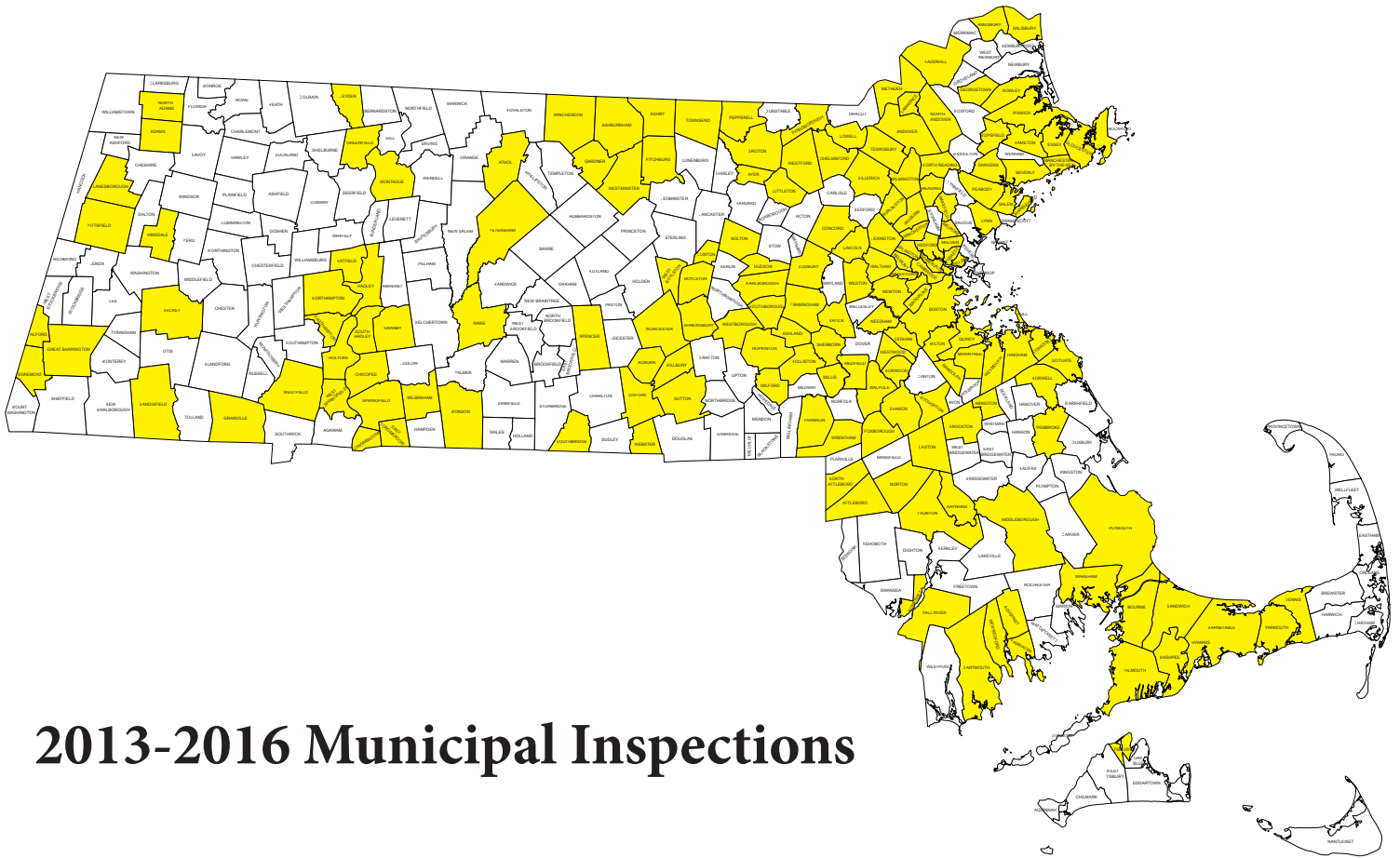


# Workplace Safety and Health Program for Public Employees

The primary goal of the Massachusetts Workplace Safety and Health Program (WSHP) is to prevent workplace injury and illness of public sector workers. WSHP accomplishes this through enforcement investigations and voluntary inspections.

## Where has WSHP inspected?

From 2013-2016, WSHP has conducted safety inspections in 170 cities and towns. Some municipalities have been inspected more than once because more than one department has been inspected (i.e. Public Works; Schools). WSHP also inspects county and state agencies.



## 2013-2016 Municipal Inspections



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STANDARDS

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Workplace Safety is No Accident



# Workplace Safety and Health Program for Public Employees

## What is WSHP looking for?

The WSHP inspectors will look for the root cause of an accident, and look for hazards which could cause injury or illness. WSHP will reference recognized industry standards, such as OSHA, to indicate that the hazard is known to cause injury or illness, and that there are feasible methods of correction.

## Which cities/towns will be inspected?

WSHP prioritizes safety inspections to meet our goal of preventing work-related injuries and illnesses:

- **High Hazard Activity (Imminent Danger)** – WSHP staff will stop at trench excavations, aerial lift operations, and roofing activities to ensure that public sector workers have adequate cave-in protection and fall protection to prevent injury.
- **Accident Investigation** – a safety inspection may be conducted after a work-related amputation, burn, electric shock, fall, fracture, or other preventable incident.
- **Complaint** – WSHP responds to employee complaints about safety conditions, although these do not always result in an inspection.
- **Voluntary Inspection** – a municipality can proactively request a voluntary safety inspection as a learning tool to identify and correct hazards in the workplace.
- **Random Inspection** – throughout the year, WSHP conducts safety inspections at random municipal departments such as public works, water and sewer, municipal light plants, airports, and schools.

## Are municipalities required to follow OSHA?

Yes. M.G.L. c149 §6 requires public sector employers to prevent work-related injuries. Complying with OSHA standards is the minimum strategy to prevent injuries in the workplace.

## What types of violations does WSHP see?

WSHP frequently sees lack of railings above pits in water treatment plants, broken ladders, electrical wiring hazards, poor equipment maintenance, and lack of training on the owner's equipment manual when workers are assigned to operate chainsaws, street sweepers and ride-on mowers. WSHP often finds that municipalities had proper equipment available, but had failed to use it or maintain it.

## Have there been any fines?

No. WSHP has the authority to issue fines, pursuant to MGL c149 §6, but this action has not yet been necessary. WSHP takes the approach that the inspection can be a learning tool for the municipality to identify and correct hazards. When the hazards are corrected before the Correction Due Date issued in our inspection reports, then a fine is not issued.

## How can I improve my safety program before an inspector visits?

WSHP has template safety programs and "Toolbox Training Talks" on our website. We also have self-audit checklist for public buildings. Visit [www.mass.gov/dols/wsHP](http://www.mass.gov/dols/wsHP).



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