

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites Northridge Hospital for Exposing Employees to Serious Injuries, Including Sharps Violations

Van Nuys—Cal/OSHA has cited Dignity Health, operator of Northridge Hospital Medical Center, for safety and health violations that exposed the hospital’s 1,700 employees to hazards. These include failure to record information in 18 cases where hospital workers were stuck with needles, and failure to provide closeable containers in emergency rooms that would keep biohazard waste from spilling out.

“California’s health and safety requirements are some of the strongest in the nation, and they’re meant to prevent hospital workers from becoming hospital patients,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum.

Cal/OSHA’s Van Nuys office opened an investigation in June after receiving a complaint. Investigators aided by Cal/OSHA’s medical unit found 13 health code violations.

There were four serious violations of the [bloodborne pathogens standard](#), which requires employers to protect workers from coming into contact with blood or other disease-carrying body fluids. A serious violation is cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious harm could result from the actual hazardous condition. In this case, the serious violations included:

- Failure to gather information required by the Sharps injury log, such as type and brand of needles involved in the 18 injury cases. The employer had no procedure in place to review the log, or to solicit required input from employees about factors contributing to contaminated needle injuries. Well-kept injury logs, and their regular review, help to identify the causes of injuries and prevent future occurrences.
- Failure to provide containers that would prevent spillage or protrusion of contaminated needles in emergency treatment and trauma rooms. Additionally, the employer did not provide readily accessible hand washing facilities for emergency room employees.

- Failure to provide appropriate sizes of gloves for employees using the medication cart in the trauma room and the after-hours intake area.

Cal/OSHA also issued eight general and regulatory violations because Dignity Health kept broken gurneys in the working area, skipped essential elements of training employees in safe patient handling, and failed to take corrective action after accidents occurred. Fines for all violations total \$44,125.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Erika Monterroza or Peter Melton at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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