SPECIAL RULES APPLY IN WORK AROUND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES:

Employers who use any substance listed as a hazardous substance in Section 339 of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations, or subject to the Hazard Communications Standard (78 C CR Section 5194), must provide employees with information on the contents on Safety Data Sheets (SDS), or equivalent information about the substance that trains employees to use the substance safely.

Employers shall make available on a timely and reasonable basis a Safety Data Sheet on each hazardous substance in the workplace upon request of an employee, an employee collective bargaining representative, or an employee's physician.

Employees have the right to see and copy their medical records and records of exposure to potentially toxic materials or harmful physical agents, and notify employees of any exposure in concentration or levels exceeding the exposure limits allowed by Cal/OSHA standards.

Any employee has the right to observe monitoring or measuring of employee exposure to hazards conducted pursuant to Cal/OSHA regulations.

WHEN CAL/OSHA COMES TO THE WORKPLACE:

A trained Cal/OSHA investigator may periodically visit the workplace to make sure your company is obeying safety and health laws.

An inspection will also be conducted when a legitimate complaint is filed by an employee with the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

Cal/OSHA may go to the workplace to investigate a serious injury or fatality.

When an inspection begins, the Cal/OSHA investigator will show official identification from the Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

The employer, or someone the employer chooses, will be given an opportunity to accompany the investigator to the workplace. A representative of the employer will be given the same opportunity. Where there is no authorized employee representative, the investigator will talk to a reasonable number of employees about safety and health conditions and request other information.

VIOLATIONS, CITATIONS & PENALTIES:

If the investigation shows that the employer has violated a safety and health standard or order, then the Division of Occupational Safety and Health issues a citation. Each citation specifies a date by which the violation must be corrected or notice, which carries no monetary penalty, may be issued in lieu of a citation for certain non-serious violations.

Citations carry penalties of up to $7,000 for each regulatory or general violation and up to $25,000 for each serious violation. Additional penalties of up to $7,000 per day for regulatory or general violations and up to $15,000 per day for serious violations may be assessed for each failure to correct a violation by the abatement date shown on the citation. A penalty of not less than $5,000 or more than $700,000 may be assessed an employer who willfully violates any occupational safety and health standard or order. The maximum civil penalty that can be assessed for each repeat violation is $70,000. A willful violation that causes death or permanent impairment of the life of an employee may be converted, in a fine of not more than $250,000, or imprisonment up to three years, or both and if the employer is a corporation or limited liability company the fine may not exceed $1.5 million.

The law provides that employers may appeal citations within 15 working days of receipt to the Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board.

An employer who receives a citation, Order to Take Special Action, or Special Order must post it prominently at or near the place where the violation occurred for three working days, or until the unsafe condition is corrected, whichever is longer, to warn employees of danger that may exist there. Any employee may protest the time allowed for correction of the violation to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health or the Appeals Board.