

# ON THE LEVEL

BALANCING INDUSTRY & ASSOCIATION NEWS

## On The Level - November 2015

### Upcoming Events & Deadlines

[Renew VPPPA Membership](#)

[Annual Self-Evaluation Webinar](#)

**Dec. 3**

[VPPPA's Got Talent Submission Deadline](#)

**Dec. 4**

[OSHA Recordkeeping Webinar](#)

**Dec. 10**

### Safety & Health News Round-Up

[Open Comment for Whistleblower Document](#)  
(OSHA)

[Emerging Risks in Green Jobs Report](#)  
(EU-OSHA)

[Grants to Combat Child Labor](#)  
(DOL)

[Moderate Cold Conditions Pose Hazards](#)  
(CDC)

[Surgical Smoke Hazard for Healthcare Workers](#)



### In This Issue

#### November

[OSHA Fines To Rise For The First Time in 25 Years](#)

[Renew Your VPPPA Membership!](#)

[Enter "VPPPA's Got Talent," Now!](#)

[Register for December Webinars](#)

[OSHA Seeks Comments](#)

[OSHA's Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines](#)

### OSHA Fines To Rise For The First Time in 25 Years

It hasn't happened since 1990 but earlier this month, it was announced that federal penalties for workplace safety violations would increase due to a provision of the new budget bill. According to the Wall Street Journal, the rise in fines will be about 80 percent, and will align more closely with inflation. More specifically, the most severe citations will change from around \$70,000 to about \$125,000.

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As part of the provision, Industrial Safety & Hygiene News (ISHN) notes two key additional changes:



- OSHA would be allowed to raise fines annually to align with the consumer price index
- OSHA would be allowed to have a one-time "catch-up" adjustment of 82 percent to make up for no increases since 1990.

"If you look at OSHA penalties in the context of other programs, they are in fact, for individual items, minuscule, comparatively speaking. For larger corporations it can be a cost of doing business," industry lawyer Baruch Fellner says in defense of the raised fines.

To learn more about the implications of the raised fines, check out [our website](#).

[-Back to Contents-](#)

## Renew Your VPPPA Membership!

We've had a very successful year so far, marked by our most enriching conference experience to date. We're excited for the upcoming year, as we'll continue to provide our members with even more exceptional benefits of VPPPA membership. Best practices, networking, educational opportunities and *The Leader* are just a few of the many benefits available.

Members who have not yet renewed for 2016 will be emailed their membership invoice soon, followed by a hard copy, shortly afterwards. Members who joined in 2015 will receive their invoice on their anniversary date.

Also, when you renew for another year, consider helping out future generations of safety professionals by donating to the VPPPA scholarship fund. Donations go toward the scholarships below:

- June Brothers Scholarship
- Stephen Brown Scholarship
- William "Sully" Scholarship



To renew your membership, visit our [website](#), or if you have questions, contact VPPPA's Membership Department by email at [membership@vpppa.org](mailto:membership@vpppa.org) or by calling (703) 761-1146.

[-Back to Contents-](#)

## Enter "VPPPA's Got Talent," Now!

"The Star-Spangled Banner," one of the most recognized songs in the country, is a song that evokes a strong sense of pride and patriotism; wouldn't it be an honor to perform the song in front of the thousands of attendees at the VPPPA national conference?!

We want to showcase our members' singing skills at the 32nd conference in Kissimmee, FL, August 29 - September 1, 2016! VPPPA will once again be taking auditions from our members for the chance to sing the national anthem during the Opening General Session at the Gaylord Palms. The winner will receive a complementary conference registration, lodging at the Gaylord Palms, and round-trip airfare to the conference. Submit entries and questions to [membership@vpppa.org](mailto:membership@vpppa.org) or contact the Membership Department at (703) 761-1146.

#### Here's how to Enter:

Submit a 90 second clip via YouTube, Dropbox or CD by Dec. 4, 2015, to be considered. For the first round, participants may sing any song they choose. The judges will narrow down the entries to a top five and then, it'll all be in your hands! The top five contestants will be asked to submit a clip of themselves singing the national anthem which will then be posted on YouTube for voting. Members will vote, and the winner will be determined by who has the most likes at the end of the voting period.



- \* Submissions: Now through 12/4/15
- \* Five Finalists Chosen: 12/11/15
- \* Voting Period: 2/1/16 - 2/26/16

The rules and requirements to enter this competition can be found [on our website](#).

[-Back to Contents-](#)

## Register for December Webinars

### Annual Self-Evaluation Webinar

There's less than two weeks to register for the "annual self-evaluation" webinar on **Dec. 3**, at 1 p.m, EDT! The webinar's presenter, Mark Norton, a safety and health professional with 24 years of experience in Arizona's state OSHA program, will explain the significance of each part of an annual self-evaluation, as well as discuss OSHA's expectations, the necessity of goal setting, common improvement areas and VPPPA member perspectives.

### OSHA Recordkeeping Webinar

On **Dec. 10**, at 1 p.m., EDT, Marianne McGee, a compliance assistance specialist for OSHA, will present an "OSHA Recordkeeping" webinar based on her 29 years of experience at OSHA. Marianne will draw from her time in the occupational safety industry to teach attendees how to become proficient in recordkeeping and help them better understand OSHA's reporting requirements.



The cost of each webinar is \$65 for VPPPA members and \$85 for nonmembers.

[Click here to register for the Annual Self-Evaluation webinar](#)

[Click here to register for the OSHA Recordkeeping webinar](#)

If you have any questions about these webinars, please contact the Conference & Education Department by calling (703) 761-1146 or you can email [conference@vpppa.org](mailto:conference@vpppa.org).

## OSHA Seeks Comments

In an effort to keep cooperative program participants informed of its resources and activities, OSHA is seeking comments on a [draft document](#) called "Protecting Whistleblowers: Recommended Practices for Employers for Preventing and Addressing Retaliation." According to OSHA, the draft document is "intended to help employers develop a program to protect employees from retaliation when they raise concerns about workplace conditions or activities that could harm workers or members of the public."

Comments on the document will be accepted until Jan. 19, 2016, and will be considered by OSHA when preparing the final document for issuance.

Comments should be submitted to [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) using the docket number OSHA-2015-0025. Please note that all comments will be publicly posted as written; do not submit personally identifiable information such as Social Security numbers and birthdates. For more information, see the [OSHA News Release](#).



## OSHA's Updated Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is seeking public comment for an updated version of its voluntary Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines (OSHA-2015-0018).

According to OSHA, the [draft document](#) will provide employers and workers with a sound, flexible framework for addressing safety and health issues in the workplace.

What's New in the Guidelines:

- A proactive approach to finding and fixing hazards before they cause injury, illness or death
- Improved safety and health in all types of workplaces
- Help for small and medium-sized businesses to effectively protect their workers
- Increase worker involvement, so all workers have a voice in workplace safety and health
- Better communication and coordination on multi-employer worksites



[Submit your comments](#) by February 15, 2016.

On The Level is prepared by VPPPA's Communications Department. These reports are for the use of VPPPA members ONLY.

VPPPA, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, promotes advances in worker safety and health excellence through best practices and cooperative efforts among workers, employers, the government and communities.

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