



Join us for our **FREE 10 Hour OSHA Certification Seminar**
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November 3 -4, 2010 in Spanish

10 - hour and 30 - hour coming in 2011

Contact us today if you would like to register or receive more information

Health Care Reform

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, commonly referred to as "Healthcare Reform" has been the hot topic in many business, political, and social circles. The rollout date of the entire law spans over several years, however, Friedman Associates wants to make sure that you are aware of some of the provisions that are currently in effect.

Dependent Coverage -

Individuals whose coverage ended, or who were not eligible for coverage, because the availability of dependent coverage of children ended before attainment of age 26,

may now be eligible to enroll in the group plan of their parent or guardian on the group's anniversary date on or after October 1, 2010.

Lifetime Limits - Health Insurance companies must remove lifetime and annual dollar limits on covered services that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services considers "essential health benefits." Lifetime and annual limits will be eliminated from plans, beginning with plan years on or after September 23, 2010.

If you would like further details on these or any provision contained in the "Healthcare Reform," contact us for free information and consultation.

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Health Insurance Tax Credit

Most people have heard that the "Healthcare Reform" bill included a tax credit for qualifying companies that pay at least 50 percent of the cost of its employees' health insurance coverage. Two of the biggest questions pertaining to the credit are who is eligible and how much is the credit.

Eligibility – Generally, employers that have fewer than 25 full-time equivalent employees and pay wages averaging less than \$50,000 per employee per year may qualify. It is important to note that not all corporate salaries are included in the \$50,000 per employee amount.

How Much – The maximum tax credit is 35 percent of the premiums (25 percent for nonprofits).

Full credit is available to companies that have less than 10 full time equivalent employees and average wages below \$35,000. The credit will gradually phase out for companies that have average wages more than \$25,000 but less than \$50,000 AND between 10 and 25 full time workers. This credit has been enacted for the years 2010 through 2013 with a revision to take place in 2014.

Make sure to discuss this tax credit with your tax professional to ensure that you are getting the most out of this new reform bill. The experts at Friedman Associates are also available to help you become more comfortable with the legislated changes.



Elevated Risk of Litigation for Fiduciaries

In times of economic transition – when layoffs, mergers and workforce adjustments happen on a regular basis – the risk of employees taking legal action against employers increases, especially when 401(k) plans suffer before an employee's termination. A recent report from the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies reminds employers of the importance of considering this liability risk, especially when the workforce is undergoing change.

Under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), fiduciaries can be held liable for losses to a benefit plan incurred as a result of alleged errors, omissions or breach of fiduciary duties. Recent court rulings have helped empower workers to bring action for losses to their own accounts, which can facilitate other claims against fiduciaries. Moreover, a provision in ERISA provides attorney's fees to plaintiffs that win a case, but never to defendants.

Employers can protect themselves by including fiduciary liability insurance in their corporate risk programs. Since employee benefits can be an important tool in attracting and retaining workers, this kind of protection against liability can be key in preventing a damaging lawsuit brought by a disgruntled former employee.



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Lead Safety Regulations

(Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule – RRP Rule)

Due to a large number of cases involving children being poisoned by lead-based paint in their own homes, the Environmental Protection Agency issued a new rule to ensure that children and other residents are protected while renovations in their home are on-going.

Any person who is paid to do work that disturbs paint in a house or child-occupied facility that was built before 1978 must follow the RRP Rule. This includes but is not limited to Residential Rental Property Owners/Managers, General Contractors, and Special Trade Contractors.

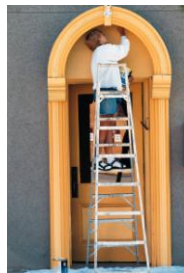
Activities included in this rule are remodeling and repair, electrical work, plumbing, painting preparation, carpentry, window replacement, and any other activity that disturbs paint in a pre-1978 housing or child-occupied facility. As with any rule or law, there are exclusions such as housing for elderly (unless children under 6 years old live there) and

minor repairs that disturb less than 6 square feet of paint per room or 20 square feet of exterior.

In order to ensure compliance, the EPA will be monitoring records and reports, doing site visits, and responding to citizen tips. The EPA can file an enforcement action seeking penalties of up to \$37,500 per violation, per day so this program can be quite expensive to not implement.

On October 1, 2010 The EPA started taking enforcement action against those that are not abiding by the new rule. The EPA will not enforce against any individual who has enrolled in the course not later than September 30, 2010, however the training must be completed before December 31, 2010.

For information on where you can take a class to ensure compliance, please call Friedman Associates at 757-420-9600



Safety Matters!

Maintain Three Point Contact to Prevent Falls

Mounting or dismounting a large truck or piece of equipment without hurting yourself seems simple, but many accidents involve this type of injury. The best way to prevent falling while getting into or out of a piece of equipment is to maintain the Three Point Contact System: three of your four limbs maintain contact with the vehicle at all times. This can be two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.

No matter what type of system your vehicle or equipment has available, the three-point system will significantly reduce the change of a slip or fall because it allows you to maintain stability and support when entering or exiting the equipment. The three points works to form a triangle, distributing your body's weight at the center.

Remember, the only person who can prevent a fall is you!