



Safety and the Precision Machining Industry

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The precision machining industry provides leading safety technology that makes a difference in our everyday lives. Anti-lock brakes for our cars...check. Air bag components...check. Heat-treated bolts and fasteners for our seat belts and to hold those child seats in securely...check.

In addition to automotive, we make parts used in the manufacture of food, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and energy — four more industries where performance and safety are critical. Our industry plays an important role in the safety of us all.

So who is taking care of the safety of those who produce these safety-critical technologies and components? Actually, it's up to us. Individually...and collectively. Mommy isn't around to tell us to wear our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). (At least not in most of our shops.) But mom would sure be upset if we lost the sight in our eye because we weren't wearing our PPE.

As professionals, we have a pride in our work and in our process for creating the things that make a difference in everyone's lives. Part of that pride includes not putting ourselves in harm's way to make our products.

The ultimate scorekeeper for safety in the United States is the Department of Labor's OSHA. As the federal enforcement agency for



occupational safety, OSHA collects and publishes the most frequently violated standards found by its inspectors during the previous year. You can find the latest list of violations online at: osha.gov/desp/compliance_assistance/frequent_standards.html.

Here are the most frequently cited standards in 2009 that are applicable to our industry:

Hazard communication standard, general industry, (29 CFR 1910.1200). This was third-most frequent citation last year. It is likely the most frequent opportunity for our industry to comply or not. Every employee has to be alerted to the hazards in his or her workplace. A review of your Hazard Communications training is a great way to assure that your company

does not get cited for violations.

Control of hazardous energy (lockout-tagout), general industry, (29 CFR 1910.147). If people are performing maintenance on powered
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industrial equipment, a means of assuring that there can be no unexpected release of hazardous energy is required. Our machines are rated in *horsepower*. Our body parts are rated at best in fractions of *manpower*. There shouldn't be any doubt about the outcome of a surprise man vs. machine event.

Perform a lockout on your equipment before working on it. Test the lockout. All of your employees should be able to end their careers with all body parts intact. Lockout is one step of assuring that.

Powered industrial trucks, general industry, (29 CFR 1910.178).

Powered mobile equipment is important in our shops for moving equipment and materials, as well as in-process and finished goods. This importance throughout our processes also makes the hazards of such equipment ubiquitous in our shops. Make sure that your equipment is up to regulations, your operators are trained and your other employees are aware of the potential hazards.

Electrical: wiring methods components and equipment (29 CFR 1910.305) and electrical systems design, general requirements (29 CFR 1910.303). These are areas to which our industry has to pay special attention.

The precision machined products industry uses machine tools to create precision components by applying those tools to material under the control of electrical energy. We cannot master our craft if we do not master the control of electricity in our shops—both in systems design and in how we maintain and operate our electrical equipment.

The last of the 2009 OSHA top ten citations that is applicable to our shops is **fall protection, training requirements, (29 CFR 1926.503)**. We work with slippery fluids in environments where overspray is common. Complete containment is virtually impossible. And, materials and packaging are handled in tremendous volumes. Fall protection means more than just attention to housekeeping. You can find related health and safety information for each of these topics on the OSHA page link listed above.

It is critical that those of us who make the components for technologies that keep everyone safe work safely and keep ourselves

safe. Making precision machined components is not an opportunity for sacrifice and risk. It is a labor of love for all of the people riding safely in their vehicles, flying in aircraft, benefiting from the latest medical technologies and enjoying their appliances at home.

Who will keep the precision machining industry safe in 2010? We all will. For ourselves. For our families. For our society. Visit the PMPA blog at:

pmpaSpeakingOfPrecision.com

There, you will find a report of the most frequently cited OSHA standards for NAICS 332721, precision machining industry.

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