Crowd Management Safety Guidelines from OSHA

OSHA has prepared these guidelines to help employers and store owners avoid injuries during the holiday shopping season, or other events where large crowds may gather. Crowd management planning should begin in advance of events that are likely to draw large crowds, and crowd management, pre-event setup and emergency situation management should be part of event planning.

Planning:
- Where large crowds are expected, hire additional staff as needed and have trained security or crowd management personnel or police officers on site.
- Create a detailed staffing plan that designates a location for each worker. Based on the size of the crowd expected, determine the number of workers that are needed in various locations to ensure the safety of the event (e.g., near the door entrances and throughout the store).
- Ensure that workers are properly trained to manage the event.
- Contact local fire and police agencies to determine if the event site meets all public safety requirements, and ensure that all permits and licenses are obtained and that local emergency services, including the local police, fire department and hospital, are aware of the event.
- Designate a worker to contact local emergency responders if necessary.
- Designate a store manager to make key decisions as needed during the event
- Provide legible and visible signs that describe entrance and exit locations, store opening times, and other important information such as the location of major sale items and restrooms.
- Prepare an emergency plan that addresses potential dangers facing workers, including overcrowding, crowd crushing, being struck by the crowd, violent acts and fire. Share emergency plan with all local public safety agencies.

Pre-Event Setup:
- Set up barricades or rope lines for crowd management well in advance of customers arriving at the store.
- Make sure that barricades are set up so that the customers’ line does not start right at the entrance to the store. This will allow for orderly crowd management entry and make it possible to divide crowds into small groups for the purpose of controlling entrance.
- Ensure that barricade lines have an adequate number of breaks and turns at regular intervals to reduce the risk of customers pushing from the rear and possibly crushing others, including workers.
- Designate workers to explain approach and entrance procedures to the arriving public, and direct them to lines or entrances.
- Make sure that outside personnel have radios or some other way to communicate with personnel inside the store and emergency responders.
- Consider using mechanisms such as numbered wristbands or tickets to provide the earlier arriving customers with first access to sale items.
- Consider using Internet lottery for “hot” items.
- Locate sale items in different parts of the store to prevent overcrowding in one place.
- Locate shopping carts and other potential obstacles or projectiles inside the store and away from the entrance, not in the parking lot.
- If appropriate, provide public amenities including toilets, washbasins, water and shelter.
- Communicate updated information to customers waiting in line. Have signs and distribute pamphlets showing the location of entrances and exits, store opening times and location of special sales items within the store.
- Shortly before opening, remind waiting crowds of the entrance process (i.e., limiting entry to small groups, redemption of numbered tickets, etc.).

During the Sales Event:
- Provide a separate store entrance for staff. Provide door monitors there to prevent crowd entry.
- Make sure that all employees and crowd control personnel are aware that the doors are about to open.
- Staff entrances with uniformed guards, police or other authorized personnel.
- Use a public address system or bullhorns to manage the entering crowd and to communicate information or problems.
- Position security or crowd managers to the sides of entering (or exiting) public, not in the center of their path.
- Provide crowd and entry management measures at all entrances, including the ones not being used. If possible, use more than one entrance.
- When the store reaches maximum occupancy, do not allow additional customers to enter until the occupancy level drops.
- Provide a safe entrance for people with disabilities.

Emergency Situations:
- Do not restrict egress, and do not block or lock exit doors
- Know in advance who to call for emergency medical response.
- Keep first-aid kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) available, and have personnel trained in using AEDs and CPR onsite.
- Instruct employees, in the event of an emergency, to follow instructions from authorized first responders, regardless of company rules.
Texas Tops for Heavy Equipment Thefts

A report released by the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) shows thefts of heavy equipment increased nationally in 2014 by 1.2% over the previous year and that Texas had the highest number of such thefts. The report, co-produced with the National Equipment Register, examines heavy equipment theft data for 2014 submitted by law enforcement to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC). It profiles that data according to theft state, theft city, theft month, equipment manufacturer, equipment style and year of manufacture. In 2014, a total of 11,625 heavy equipment thefts were reported to law enforcement — up from the 11,486 reported in 2013. Texas ranked number one in 2014 with 1,650 reported thefts. Nationwide the top city with the most thefts was Houston (201), and ranking third was San Antonio, Texas (83). The three most stolen heavy equipment items in 2014 were: mowers (riding or garden tractor: 5,051), loaders (skid steer, wheeled: 1,907) and tractors (wheeled or tracked: 1,475). John Deere was the number one brand theft target in 2014 followed by Kubota, Bobcat, Caterpillar and Toro. As for recoveries, only 23% of heavy equipment stolen in 2014 was found, making it a costly crime for insurance companies, equipment owners and rental agencies.

OSHA Fines Could Increase Up to 80% Next Year

Employers beware! The new bipartisan budget, passed by both the House and the Senate and signed by President Obama on November 2, 2015, contains provisions that will raise OSHA penalties for the first time in 25 years. The budget allows for an initial penalty “catch up adjustment,” which must be in place by August 1, 2016. The catch up adjustment is tied to the percentage difference between the October 2015 Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the October 1990 CPI.

Because the October 2015 CPI will not be available until November 17, 2015, the actual percentage increase is unknown at this time. However, based on recent CPI trends, the increase will likely be in the range of 70% – 80% over current penalty amounts. OSHA would be required to pass an interim final rulemaking to finalize the “catch up” increase. Assuming an 80% catch up adjustment, starting in August 2016, new maximum penalties would be as follows:

- Other than serious violations: $12,740
- Serious violations: $12,740
- Willful violations: $127,400
- Repeat violations: $127,400
- Failure to abate: $12,740/day

After the initial catch up adjustment, OSHA will be required to implement annual cost of living increases, with the adjustment tied to the year over year percentage increase in the CPI. Adjustments must be made by mid-January each subsequent year.