DOL clarifies FMLA definition of son/daughter

Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis has stated, "Workplaces have changed over the last 10 years and how we view families has evolved as well." The DOL's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) now ensures that an employee who assumes the role of caregiving for a child is entitled to family leave regardless of the legal or biological relationship to the child. For example, an uncle caring for his young niece and nephew when their single parent has been called to active military duty may exercise his right to family leave. Or an employee who intends to share parenting of a child with his or her same sex partner will be eligible. The FMLA allows workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period to care for loved ones or themselves. Information is available toll-free at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243).

**Department of Labor (Wage and Hour Division) -**

DOT handbook updated

The "Employer Handbook" published by the DOT Office of Drug and Alcohol Policy and Compliance has been updated with new Department of Health and Human Services web site addresses related to certified laboratories and makers of blind specimens.

**DOT (Employee Handbook) -**
www.dot.gov/ost/dapc/documents/employerguidelines20100714.pdf [Internet Explorer link]

OSHA standards under review

Three OSHA standards are at various stages of the agency's ongoing rule-making and review process:

A review has been completed on the lowered permissible exposure limits for methylene chloride, which is used in paint stripping (and paint remover manufacturing), metal cleaning and degreasing, and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Results indicate the 1997 standard is successfully preventing respiratory and central nervous system damage as well as deaths from cancer and other illnesses.


The hexavalent chromium standard (final rule) took effect on June 15. It requires employers to notify workers about any exposure; previously, they only needed to take steps when hexavalent chromium levels exceeded the permissible exposure limit. Workers exposed to this chemical while handling pigments, spray paints, or coatings containing chromates; operating chrome plating baths; or welding or cutting metals containing chromium are at greater risk for lung cancer and damage to the nose, throat and respiratory tract.


The 1991 bloodborne pathogens standard is up for review. Its effectiveness will be assessed, along with its implementation cost; conflict with other federal, state, and local government regulations; and relevance to current exposure risk (which may have been changed by technology or economic conditions). Health care and emergency personnel are at risk of contracting diseases (including hepatitis B and C and the human immunodeficiency viruses) from exposures to bloodborne pathogens.