



(November 18, 2015)

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

Alma L. Lee
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing:** OSHA issued notices to the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center on November 6 for exposing workers to an unsafe workplace.  
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RICHMOND, Va. (WRIC) — The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued notices to the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center on November 6 for exposing workers to an unsafe workplace.

OSHA issued the notices to the medical center after identifying [four willful](#), [two serious](#) and [eight other-than-serious](#) safety violations. [Click here to see the violations.](#)

On May 6, OSHA began an inspection in response to a complaint alleging inadequate protections for employees exposed to workplace violence hazards while providing patient care.

The willful violations involved the medical center exposing employees to workplace violence and physical assault. The investigation also found that the medical center failed to train employees on the prevention and management of workplace violence and failed to properly record workplace injuries and illnesses on OSHA 300 logs.

“Supervisors and employees were not trained on recordkeeping, resulting in the serious violations,” OSHA said in a press release sent out Tuesday. “The other-than-serious violations all related to recordkeeping deficiencies.”

The employer has 15 business days from receipt of the notices to comply or request an informal conference with OSHA's area director.

According to OSHA, McGuire VA Medical Center has been inspected six times since 1992, four of which resulted in notices. In 2009, the facility received notices for recordkeeping deficiencies.

Nationwide within the past five years, 16 inspections of VA facilities resulted in notices issued for recordkeeping deficiencies. Three of those were classified as repeat.

This is the third time in recent months that OSHA has issued notices related to workplace violence to a Veterans Affairs medical facility. Both the El Paso VA Health Care System and the Atlanta VA Medical Center were cited earlier this year for exposing employees to workplace violence and other hazards.

“The safety hazards identified at this facility demonstrate a need for a renewed commitment by the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide a safe workplace for the VA employees who care for our nation's service members, veterans, their families and survivors,” said Stanley J. Dutko Jr., OSHA's area director in Norfolk. “All employers, including federal employers, are responsible for evaluating and determining the extent to which employees may be exposed to physical assault or other forms of workplace violence and taking the appropriate actions to eliminate or minimize that exposure. Every employer is responsible for ensuring their workplaces are safe and healthy for all employees.”

The [Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970](#) requires federal agencies to comply with the same health and safety standards as private sector employers.

“The federal agency equivalent of a private sector citation is the notice of an unhealthful or unsafe working condition, which informs agency officials of violations. OSHA cannot propose monetary penalties against another federal agency for failure to comply with its standards,” Tuesday's release from OSHA reads.

To ask questions, obtain compliance assistance, file a complaint, or report amputations, eye loss, workplace hospitalizations, fatalities or situations posing imminent danger to workers, the public should call OSHA's toll-free hotline at 800-321-OSHA (6742) or the agency's Norfolk Area Office at 757-441-3820.