

Are You Ready For Trouble?

By George Porter

The thing about trouble is you never know when it is coming and when it does show up it is usually at the worst possible time. There are basically two kinds of trouble that visit us in the business of installing, physical trouble and financial trouble. Most of the time they arrive as a team so you had better be prepared to deal with it. The good part is you have help available for free! That's right free! Did you know that your state has people to assist you in your business? Now I know that the old saying, "We're from the government and we have come to help you," is a classic joke, but you might want to look into these services. You did after all pay for them in your taxes, think of it as a kind of rebate.

All states also have what is known as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Consultation Project. It is usually connected to the state university but not always. Yes, this is OSHA, but then no, it is not. There are of course OSHA inspectors, who are quite possibly the most feared of all government employees. These people have caused panic and even near heart failure for small business owners when they walk up to them on the job. These folks are NOT those guys. Believe it or not OSHA hired consultants in every state of the union to help the people OSHA regulates to avoid OSHA trouble. It doesn't have to make sense, we're talking about the government here. These people will come out to your job site and give you a 100% evaluation of how you are complying with current OSHA regulations (you did know you had to comply didn't you?).

They will provide you with a list of those infractions for which real OSHA inspectors would have fined the life out of you, and they will advise you what to do about the problems. They will thank you for calling them and then leave. It is in their contract with OSHA that they WILL NOT REPORT any of their findings to OSHA. If they did report their customers to OSHA you can imagine how often they would be called for their services and they would very soon be out of a job. They will just advise you and that's all UNLESS they find a very serious life threatening problem, then they will give you a reasonable amount of time to correct it or they will have to report it. This is much better than you just ignoring a problem like this and/or getting someone killed and having a real OSHA inspector show up, put you out of business plus take everything you own in fines.

You may be asking yourself, "why would I bother doing this"? Good question, but here is the question you should ask first. What would happen if a real OSHA inspector showed up and observed me and my crew at work setting up a new home? (This would be done from a distance so you wouldn't be aware that they were around.) What are some of the things OSHA inspectors might look for?

- Safety timbers under homes.
- Hard hats, safety glasses, steel toe shoes
- Appropriate first aid kit on job
- Safety training for your employees
- All safety shields on equipment
- Extension cords in good repair

- Appropriate ladders for use around electric wires
- Employee knowledge of what substances they use that are classed as hazardous. (MSDS Sheet)
- Qualifications of each employee to do the job he is doing such as working on gas or electricity

And the list goes on and on. Call these guys. You will probably not be real comfortable with the visit but then consider the alternative. Companies have been fined tens of thousands of dollars for not being aware and worse than that, people have been killed and injured who had no idea they were in any kind of danger. This service is free, it is easy, and you will be ready for trouble when it comes.

Here are the numbers for the USA if you are so inclined.

Alabama	205-348-3033
Alaska	907-264-2599
Arizona	602-255-5795
Arkansas	501-682-4522
California	415-557-2870
Colorado	303-491-6151
Connecticut	203-566-4550
Delaware	302-571-3908
Florida	904-488-3044
Georgia	404-894-8274
Hawaii	808-548-7510
Idaho	208-385-3283
Illinois	312-917-2339
Indiana	317-232-2688
Iowa	515-281-5352
Kansas	913-296-4386
Kentucky	502-564-6895
Louisiana	504-342-9601
Maine	207-289-6460
Maryland	301-333-4218
Massachusetts	617-727-3463
Michigan	517-322-1814
Minnesota	612-297-2393
Mississippi	601-987-3981
Missouri	314-751-3403
Montana	406-444-6401
Nebraska	402-471-4717
Nevada	702-789-0546
New Hampshire	603-271-3107
New Jersey	609-984-3507
New Mexico	505-827-2885
New York	518-457-5468

North Carolina	919-662-4651
North Dakota	701-224-2348
Ohio	614-644-2631
Oklahoma	405-528-1500
Oregon	503-378-3272
Pennsylvania	800-382-1241
Rhode Island	401-277-2438
South Carolina	803-734-9599
South Dakota	605-688-4101
Tennessee	615-741-7036
Texas	512-458-7254
Utah	801-530-6868
Vermont	802-828-2765
Virginia	804-367-1986
Washington	206-586-0961
West Virginia	304-348-7890
Wisconsin	414-521-5063
Wyoming	307-777-7786