The GEO Group must address workplace violence hazards as a result of corporate-wide settlement with US Department of Labor

JACKSON, Miss. – The GEO Group Inc., based in Boca Raton, Fla., has entered into a corporate-wide settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor that requires the company to implement comprehensive procedures and policies to better safeguard its workers against the hazards of workplace violence in every correctional and adult detention facility that it manages in the nation.

"This corporate-wide settlement agreement will have a far-reaching effect and impact on correctional officers and other staff nationwide," said Teresa A. Harrison, OSHA's acting regional administrator in Atlanta. "This agreement is the first of its kind in the corrections industry that addresses the hazards associated with workplace violence."

In June 2012, the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration cited the company for workplace safety violations at a prison facility it managed in Meridian, Miss. These violations included a willful violation for the company's failure to: provide adequate staffing of correctional officers; fix malfunctioning cell door locks; and provide required training and personal protective equipment to protect employees from incidents of violent behavior by inmates, including stabbings, bites and other injuries. The company contested the citation to the Occupational Safety & Health Review Commission. Under the three-year agreement, the willful citation has been reclassified as a serious violation and the company will pay a $13,600 fine. Additionally, the company is required to hire a third-party consultant to develop and maintain a workplace violence prevention program and conduct onsite workplace violence safety audits at each of the 42 correctional and adult detention facilities that it manages across the country. They will also need to create a corporate-level workplace violence coordinator position and develop a workplace safety committee at each of these facilities. In those unionized facilities covered under the agreement, the committees will include representatives from both labor and management.

Text Version:

Title: Injury and Illness Incident Rates for Correctional Officers and Jailers
Type: Two vertical bar charts indicating incidence rates per 10,000 full-time workers for private sector, state and local governments, correctional officers and jailers.

Values:

Chart 1 - Incidence rate for non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work:
- Total private sector, state and local government: 112.4
- Correctional Officers and Jailers: 459.1

Chart 2 - Incidence rate for violence and other injuries by persons or animal:
- Total private sector, state and local government: 7.2
The GEO Group specializes in correctional, detention and community re-entry services with 95 facilities, approximately 73,000 beds and 18,000 employees around the globe. The GEO Group’s facilities are located in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa.


To ask questions, obtain compliance assistance; file a complaint or report 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 Jackson office at 601-965-4606.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA’s role is to assure these conditions for America’s working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit http://www.osha.gov.

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**Correctional Officers and Jailers: 168.5**

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 10,000 full-time workers and were calculated as: \((N/EH) \times 20,000,000\) where \(N\) = number of injuries and illnesses, \(EH\) = total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year.

The case was litigated by the department’s Office of the Solicitor in Atlanta. OSHA’s investigation was conducted by the agency’s Jackson Area Office.

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