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Book Review

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Book Reviews

FRED BLOSSER, PRIMER ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH. (The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. 1992) [374 pp.] Appendices (e.g., forms, OSHA Inspection Procedures, OSHA/EPA Memorandum of Understanding, statute), glossary, index, preface, table of cases. LC 91-43769; ISBN 0-87179-741-0. [\$46.00 paper. 1250 23d Street, NW, Ste. 300B; Washington DC 20037.]

In 136 pages Blosser's primer provides a comprehensive overview of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (the Act) which created several well-known federal agencies to oversee worker health and safety: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety (NIOSH). Most of the rest of the book (200 pages) is devoted to appendices as set forth above.

Blosser's book begins with explanations of elementary concepts and the basic structure of federal regulation. It then leads the reader through pertinent aspects of the Act and regulations promulgated since its passage. As one would expect from a primer, the book is geared toward persons in the public and private sectors who may not need detailed knowledge of all regulatory issues concerning employee health and safety but do require general knowledge, e.g., middle managers.

Throughout, Blosser intermingles relevant historical references with the names of key people who were instrumental in developing today's rules and regulations. He also reminds readers that these rules attempt to strike a balance between the interests of employees and employers as well as between the Federal and state governments who share authority.

After a ten page overview, three chapters cover, respectively, OSHA standards, record keeping requirements and enforcement. Here, inspection procedures and categories of violations are discussed — as well as possible fines, settlement, and review by the OSHRC and the courts. Also, with regard to record keeping, there is some discussion of employee privacy.

Chapter 5 discusses employees' protected activities, e.g., complaining about unsafe working conditions, and employees' right not to be discriminated against for engaging in such activities. Chapters 6 through 8 discuss, respectively, the relationship between state and federal governments, including federal preemption; the obligations of federal agencies *as employers* with regard to employee safety; and the research programs of the NIOSH.

The last chapter adds a nice touch by going "beyond OSHA" and highlighting related programs under statutes governing mine, nuclear and aviation industries. It also briefly discusses several relevant environmental statutes. Although not detailed, this chapter generally cites prominent parts of statutes. It often also cites regulations and leading cases.

This primer provides insight into the basic effects of federal and state regulatory processes on worker health and safety. Blosser uses an easily understood, structured approach to a myriad of laws and regulations governing employee health and safety. He is adept at condensing complicated regulatory law into readable, concise language that can be understood by non-lawyers. People who need a place to start in learning about worker health and safety requirements would do well to consider his book. As a former industrial research employee, I found it both fascinating and informative.

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