

3(5) of the Act: the State Department of Labor and Industry; the State Highway and Motor Vehicle Department; State, county, and municipal law enforcement agencies as well as penal institutions; State, county, and municipal judicial bodies; State University Boards of Trustees; State, county, and municipal public school boards and commissions; and public libraries.

(2) Depending on the facts in the particular situation, the following types of entities would probably be excluded as employers under section 3(5) of the Act: harbor districts, irrigation districts, port authorities, bi-State authorities over bridges, highways, rivers, harbors, etc.; municipal transit entities; and State, county, and local hospitals and related institutions.

(3) The following examples are of entities which would normally not be regarded as a "State or political subdivision of a State", but unusual factors to the contrary in a particular case may indicate otherwise: Public utility companies, merely regulated by State or local bodies; businesses, such as alcoholic beverage distributors, licensed under State or local law; other business entities which under agreement perform certain functions for the State, such as gasoline stations conducting automobile inspections for State and county governments.

§ 1975.6 Policy as to domestic household employment activities in private residences.

As a matter of policy, individuals who, in their own residences, privately employ persons for the purpose of performing for the benefit of such individuals what are commonly regarded as ordinary domestic household tasks, such as house cleaning, cooking, and caring for children, shall not be subject to the requirements of the Act with respect to such employment.

PART 1977—DISCRIMINATION AGAINST EMPLOYEES EXERCISING RIGHTS UNDER THE WILLIAMS-STEIGER OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT OF 1970

GENERAL

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AUTHORITY: Secs. 8, 11, Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 657, 660); Secretary of Labor's Order No. 12-71 (36 FR 8754).

SOURCE: 38 FR 2681, Jan. 29, 1973, unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL

§ 1977.1 Introductory statement.

(a) The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651, et seq.), hereinafter referred to as the Act, is a Federal statute of general application designed to regulate employment conditions relating to occupational safety and health and to achieve safer and healthier workplaces throughout the Nation. By terms of the Act, every person engaged in a business affecting commerce who has employees

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is required to furnish each of his employees employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm, and, further, to comply with occupational safety and health standards promulgated under the Act. See part 1975 of this chapter concerning coverage of the Act.

(b) The Act provides, among other things, for the adoption of occupational safety and health standards, research and development activities, inspections and investigations of workplaces, and recordkeeping requirements. Enforcement procedures initiated by the Department of Labor, review proceedings before an independent quasi-judicial agency (the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission), and express judicial review are provided by the Act. In addition, States which desire to assume responsibility for development and enforcement of standards which are at least as effective as the Federal standards published in this chapter may submit plans for such development and enforcement of the Secretary of Labor.

(c) Employees and representatives of employees are afforded a wide range of substantive and procedural rights under the Act. Moreover, effective implementation of the Act and achievement of its goals depend in large part upon the active but orderly participation of employees, individually and through their representatives, at every level of safety and health activity.

(d) This part deals essentially with the rights of employees afforded under section 11(c) of the Act. Section 11(c) of the Act prohibits reprisals, in any form, against employees who exercise rights under the Act.

§ 1977.2 Purpose of this part.

The purpose of this part is to make available in one place interpretations of the various provisions of section 11(c) of the Act which will guide the Secretary of Labor in the performance of his duties thereunder unless and until otherwise directed by authoritative decisions of the courts, or concluding, upon reexamination of an interpretation, that it is incorrect.

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§ 1977.3 General requirements of section 11(c) of the Act.

Section 11(c) provides in general that no person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because the employee has:

(a) Filed any complaint under or related to the Act;

(b) Instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to the Act;

(c) Testified or is about to testify in any proceeding under the Act or related to the Act; or

(d) Exercised on his own behalf or on behalf of others any right afforded by the Act.

Any employee who believes that he has been discriminated against in violation of section 11(c) of the Act may, within 30 days after such violation occurs, lodge a complaint with the Secretary of Labor alleging such violation. The Secretary shall then cause appropriate investigation to be made. If, as a result of such investigation, the Secretary determines that the provisions of section 11(c) have been violated civil action may be instituted in any appropriate United States district court, to restrain violations of section 11(c)(1) and to obtain other appropriate relief, including rehiring or reinstatement of the employee to his former position with back pay. Section 11(c) further provides for notification of complainants by the Secretary of determinations made pursuant to their complaints.

§ 1977.4 Persons prohibited from discriminating.

Section 11(c) specifically states that “no person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee” because the employee has exercised rights under the Act. Section 3(4) of the Act defines “person” as “one or more individuals, partnerships, associations, corporations, business trusts, legal representatives, or any group of persons.” Consequently, the prohibitions of section 11(c) are not limited to actions taken by employers against their own employees. A person may be chargeable with discriminatory action against an employee of another person. Section 11(c) would extend to such entities as organizations representing