HIOSH DIRECTIVE

DIRECTIVE NO.: CPL 02-00-153	EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012
SUBJECT: Communicating OSHA Fatality Inspection Procedures to a Victim's Family	

This CPL has been adopted however Section IX. Communications with the Next of Kin and the Appendices have been amended to reflect HIOSHs equivalences.

OSHA INSTRUCTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR — Occupational Safety and Health Administration

DIRECTIVE NUMBER: CPL 02-00-153 **EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 17, 2012

SUBJECT: Communicating OSHA Fatality Inspection Procedures to a Victim's Family

Purpose:	This Instruction provides guidance to ensure the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) communicates its fatality inspection procedures to the victim's family and facilitates the exchange of information throughout the inspection and settlement process.
Scope:	This Instruction applies OSHA-wide.
References:	See paragraph IV.
Cancellations:	None.
State Impact:	Notice of intent and equivalency required; see paragraph V.
Action Offices:	National, Regional, Area, State Plan and Consultation Offices.
Originating Office:	Directorate of Enforcement Programs.
Contact:	Directorate of Enforcement Programs Office of General Industry Enforcement 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, N3119 Washington, DC 20210 (202-693-1850)

By and Under the Authority of

David Michaels, PhD, MPH
Assistant Secretary

Executive Summary

This Instruction outlines OSHA's commitment to communicating with a victim's family, or a designated representative, throughout the fatality inspection process. This initiative will keep the family informed of the status of the inspection, preliminary findings, any proposed citations, and settlement and closure of the case.

Significant Changes

This is a new Instruction.

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I. Purpose.

This Instruction provides guidance to ensure OSHA communicates its fatality inspection procedures to the victim's family and facilitates the exchange of information throughout the entire inspection process.

II. Scope.

This applies OSHA-wide.

III. Cancellations.

None.

IV. References.

A. CPL 02-00-064, Implementation of a Construction Fatality Information Dissemination System, June 5, 1985.

B. STP 01-01-029, Final Rule on Reporting of Fatality or Multiple Hospitalization Incidents, June 7, 1994.

C. CPL 02-00-150, Field Operations Manual (FOM), April 22, 2011.

D. TED 01-00-018, Initial Training Program for OSHA Compliance Personnel, August 6, 2008.

E. Fatality Investigation Procedures, Regional Instruction, Region VII, May 28, 2010.

V. Federal Program Change.

Federal Program Change, Notice of Intent Required, Adoption Encouraged. This Instruction describes a Federal program change which provides guidance and a three-phased approach for communicating with family members of victims of workplace accidents throughout the investigation of the accident and settlement process. States are strongly encouraged to adopt this Instruction and should utilize it in an "at least as effective" manner to communicate with the victim's family members.

States must submit a notice of intent indicating if the State has or will adopt policies and procedures for communicating with family members of victims of workplace accidents and if so, whether the State's policies and procedures are or will be identical to or different from the Federal program. OSHA will post summary information on the State responses to this Instruction on its website.

VI. Background.

This Instruction provides guidance for communication with the next of kin following a workplace fatality. OSHA places a high priority on fatality inspections, which demand a high degree of sensitivity and investigative accuracy. Only trained and experienced OSHA representatives should be assigned to interact with families of the deceased.

VII. Definitions.

A. Fatality. A worker death resulting from a work-related incident or exposure; in general, from an accident or an illness caused by or related to a workplace hazard.

B. Next of Kin. Individual(s), often a family member, listed as the emergency contact(s) on the victim's employment records; another person identified by the employer if an emergency contact is not identified on the employment records or no such record exist; or a representative designated by the next of kin.

VIII. Training.

OSHA compliance officers attend several OSHA Training Institute courses relevant to fatality inspections. OSHA personnel involved in fatality inspections and in communicating with the next of kin must complete training in accordance with TED 01-00-018, Initial Training Program for OSHA Compliance Personnel, in addition to receiving on-the-job field training under the guidance of a supervisor and/or an experienced compliance officer.

IX. Communications with the Next of Kin.

HIOSH places a high priority on communicating with families after a workplace fatality. Care must be taken to ensure sensitivity and tact are exercised during all communications. Interactions with the next of kin can typically be accomplished by using a "three- phase approach" which includes: an initial communication; follow-up communications throughout the inspection; and post-inspection communications. This will ensure that HIOSH receives the necessary information about the victim, job history, co-workers, and keeps the next of kin informed from the beginning of the inspection and through the progression of the inspection until the case is either closed or becomes a final order.

NOTE: Where HIOSH is not able to identify the victim's next of kin, all attempts shall be fully documented in the case file.

If the victim's next of kin does not want to speak with HIOSH, their wishes should be respected. However, the HIOSH representative should notify his/her supervisor of the next of kin's wishes, make a notation in the case file, and ensure that all procedures of FOM, Chapter VIII.B.2.d., are followed. The HIOSH representative should provide the next of kin with his/her point of contact information, including the Honolulu Office's telephone number, address and an e-mail address. The next of kin should be instructed to contact HIOSH with any questions regarding the inspection.

A. Initial Communication.

Prior to any initial communication, HIOSH should verify through interviews with the employer and/or local authorities, that the next of kin has been previously notified of the fatality. After the initial communication, HIOSH will then contact the next of kin to request work-related information concerning the fatality and encourage the next of kin to contact HIOSH with any additional information.

1. The HIOSH representative should ensure the following is explained during the initial communication with the next of kin:

   a. HIOSH inspects the worksite(s) where fatalities have occurred to determine whether a violation of HIOSH safety and health standards has occurred.

   b. These inspections are often comprehensive in nature, but at times are limited to safety and health hazards that may be associated with the fatality. The inspection may take up to six months to complete.

   c. If HIOSH finds that the employer violated safety and health standards, the agency may issue citations and seek civil or criminal penalties against the employer. HIOSH does not issue citations or seek civil penalties solely because there was a workplace fatality.

   d. HIOSH is barred from releasing certain information as a result of the applicability of legal privileges. HIOSH will explain that the releasable portions of the case file will not be made available to the next of kin until after the employer contest period has passed or no contest has been filed. In situations where the case is contested, the case file will not be made available until after litigation is concluded. If a criminal referral is under consideration or has been made, the case file cannot be released until those actions are complete.

   e. Upon issuance of a Hawaii Labor Relations Board (HLRB) final order, the next of kin will be afforded the opportunity to discuss the case with the Administrator.

f. At any time during the inspection and throughout the inspection process, the next of kin may contact HIOSH to inquire about the status of the case or to ask questions.

2. After receiving next of kin information, initial communication with the next of kin should normally occur within five working days. HIOSH should explain the investigative process of the fatality inspection and ensure that the next of kin understands the role of HIOSH as noted in Paragraph (A)(1) above. HIOSH should also explain the role of each party below:

a. Law Enforcement.

Generally, first responders such as local police and fire personnel arrive at the incident scene within minutes of the event. If local law enforcement determines that foul play did not contribute to the incident, they will release jurisdiction of the site to OSHA for inspection. Law enforcement and OSHA inspections are conducted independently. OSHA will determine whether any workplace health and safety laws were violated, while the police consider possible criminal matters.

b. Coroner.

Coroners identify possible causal factors related to some workplace fatalities. The coroner's report is also independent of HIOSH's inspection. In some cases, HIOSH will obtain information from the coroner as part of the inspection.

3. The Administrator condolence letter (Appendix A), as per FOM, Chapter VIII.B.2.d, Family of Victims, will be sent within five working days after contact with the next of kin.

NOTE: In some circumstances, it may not be appropriate to follow these procedures (e.g., in the case of a small business, the owner or supervisor may be a relative of the victim). The form letter should be modified to take any special circumstance into account or a form letter should not be sent. If a letter is not sent, explain the rationale in the case file.

4. All communication with the next of kin, including the Administrators condolence letters, will be noted in the case file.

B. Follow-up Communications.

Follow-up communications are vital to the exchange of information. These communications allow HIOSH to provide updates on the status of the inspection and provide the next of kin with an opportunity to ask questions. However, HIOSH may not divulge any privileged information (such as the name of potential witnesses) during the course of these discussions. This exchange should occur periodically until the inspection is completed and findings are communicated to the next of kin.

HIOSH's commitment to exchange information with the next of kin shall be as follows:

1. If the inspection takes more than 60 days to complete, updated information to the next of kin should continue on a periodic basis; for example, once every 60 days or at a time agreed to between HIOSH and the next of kin.

2. HIOSH will explain various aspects of the inspection, including the inspection findings letter (Appendix B or Appendix C), HIOSH citations and penalties, the informal conference process, and Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) issues.

   NOTE: If the next of kin opts out of the exchange of information, initially or during the inspection, the HIOSH representative must respect the decision, notify their supervisor, and inform the next of kin that he/she may inquire about the status of the case at a later date, if desired.

C. Post-Inspection Communications.

Depending on the case, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations may issue a press release. If a press release is planned, HIOSH will make every attempt to notify the family by telephone before the information is released to the public.

1. No Proposed Citations.

   If citations are not issued, the HIOSH representative should explain the findings of the inspection during the post-inspection communication. Additionally, the HIOSH representative should be prepared to discuss and explain the following:

   a. HIOSH does not issue citations solely because there was a workplace fatality.

b. HIOSH inspected the worksite(s) to determine whether a violation of HIOSH safety and health standards had occurred. The workplace inspection found no alleged violation(s) of safety and health standards and, as a result, no citations were issued to the employer.

c. HIOSH should make the next of kin aware of the UIPA, as it pertains to HIOSH's inspection file.

d. Within five days of closing the case, the case closure letter should be sent to the next of kin (Appendix B).

2. Proposed Citations.

After confirmation that the employer has received the citations, HIOSH should begin post-inspection communications with the next of kin to explain the alleged violation(s), proposed penalties, any reduction factors, violation classification, abatement requirements, settlement procedures, and UIPA requests, as it pertains to HIOSH's inspection. HIOSH should explain that communications between HIOSH and the next of kin will continue until the case becomes a final order. HIOSH will notify the next of kin if the citations have been altered by an informal conference, if the case is contested, of the dates of the hearing if the case goes to hearing and of the outcome of the contested or any alterations affecting the citations issued.

NOTE: HIOSH should emphasize that although civil penalties were proposed, penalties under the OSH Act are not based on the occurrence of a fatality. Instead, the gravity of the violation, which factors in severity of injury and probability of occurrence, is one of several considerations in penalty calculation.

a. Upon confirmation that the employer received the citation(s), HIOSH should ensure that the inspection findings letter (Appendix C) with a copy of the citation(s), HIOSH Citations and Penalties fact sheet, and the HIOSH Fatality inspection fact sheet are sent to the next of kin.

b. HIOSH will explain that the releasable portions of the case file will not be made available to the next of kin until after the employer contest period has passed or no contest has been filed. In situations where the case is contested, the case file will not be made available until after litigation is completed. If a criminal referral is under consideration or has been made, the case file cannot be released until those actions are complete.

3. Upon receipt of a final order resulting from a signed informal settlement agreement or a formal settlement agreement, HIOSH should inform the next of kin of the settlement and explain the outcome. Issues associated with the settlement agreement or HLRB decision (i.e., amended abatement dates, reclassification of violations, and the modification or withdrawal of a penalty, a citation, or a citation item) may be discussed. Finally, HIOSH should again make the next of kin aware of the UIPA, as it pertains to HIOSH's inspection.

   a. Within five days of a final order closing the case, the case closure letter should be sent to the next of kin (Appendix D).

   b. All communications with the next of kin should be noted in the case file.

APPENDIX A

ADMINISTRATOR CONDOLENCE LETTER

Dear :

Please accept our sincerest sympathy regarding the tragic accident that resulted in the death of **[victim's name]**. We deeply regret the loss of your **[husband's, mother's, friend's, son's, etc.]** life.

The Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations is investigating the circumstances surrounding Mr./Ms. _____'s death. The HIOSH inspects the worksites where fatalities have occurred to determine whether a violation of the HIOSH safety and health standards has occurred. These inspections are often comprehensive in nature but at times may be limited to the area in which the fatality occurred.

The HIOSH does not issue citations solely because there was a workplace fatality. However, if during an investigation, HIOSH finds that the employer violated safety and health standards, citations may be issued and civil penalties may be sought against the employer. The case may also be referred to the State Attorney General for possible criminal prosecution.

Enclosed is some information about HIOSH fatality inspections. If you believe you or another family member or friend may have information concerning your **[husband's, mother's, friend's, son's, etc.]** death, please contact us so that we can discuss this with you.

The Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) and Section 396-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes govern the release of information concerning investigations conducted by HIOSH.

If you have any questions about our inspection or any of the information enclosed, please contact:

Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 423
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 586-9116
E-Mail: dlir.hiosh@hawaii.gov

Again, please accept our heartfelt condolences.

Sincerely,

Administrator

Enclosures

(Enclosure)

HIOSH CITATIONS AND PENALTIES

HIOSH citations state the specific safety and health standards the company is alleged to have violated. They note, both by number and name, the individual sections of HIOSH standards that the employer allegedly failed to follow. (A complete listing of HIOSH standards can be accessed on the agency's Internet site at www.hawaii.gov/labor/hiosh under "Standards.")

Citations specify the location in the plant or on the site where the violation occurred and the circumstances surrounding the violation. The Administrator signs and issues the citations. Citations must be issued within six months following identification of the violations. Even if they disagree with the findings, employers must post a copy of each citation at or near the place where an alleged violation occurred for three days or until the violation is abated, whichever is longer.

Citations identify required abatement dates (the dates when the hazards must be corrected) and proposed penalties for each alleged violation. For violations that are easy to fix, immediate abatement may be appropriate. If an employer must purchase equipment or significantly modify the workplace, a longer period is permitted.

Proposed penalties may range as high as $77,000 for a willful violation or $7,700 for a serious violation. These amounts were set into law by the Hawaii Legislature in 2011.
Other-than-serious violations may carry penalties or there may be no penalty proposed for these violations. The HIOSH proposes citations when a standard has been violated. The amount of each proposed citation can be adjusted based on the employer size, good faith on the part of the employer (those implementing the safety and health program), and inspection history.

Violations are classified as willful if HIOSH has evidence that the employer intentionally disregarded the requirements of the Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Law (Chapter 396, Hawaii Revised Statutes) and/or was plainly indifferent to the safety of employees. Violations are identified as serious if there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result and that the employer knew, or should have known, of the hazard. A violation that has a direct relationship to job safety and health, but probably would not cause death or serious physical harm, is classified as other-than-serious. Violations may also be characterized as repeat if HIOSH has cited the company for a substantially similar hazard within the past five years.

The HIOSH proposes penalties as a result of violations, but does not actually have the authority to impose fines. That authority is granted by law to the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Employers can contest (challenge) alleged violations, proposed penalties or abatement dates before Hawaii Labor Relations Board (HLRB). If the employer decides to challenge any part of HIOSH's findings, they must do so within 20 calendar days after the employer receives the citations.

Employers may request a meeting with HIOSH to discuss the issued citations and possibly to enter into an informal settlement of the case. This may involve reductions in penalties in exchange for promptly correcting violations. The HIOSH's primary concern remains prevention of injuries, illnesses and deaths rather than collection of funds. (All penalty monies go directly to the State General Funds; they are not part of HIOSH's budget or credited to the agency.)

If an employer acknowledges the violations and agrees to pay the proposed penalties, then the citations as issued or amended automatically become a final order. The employer pays the penalties and the case is closed. The employer may also contest a part of a citation and pay part of the penalties assessed, or contest the entire case. Contested cases proceed through an administrative review process at the HLRB. The employer or HIOSH may further appeal the case in the appropriate Circuit Court of Appeals, if dissatisfied with the HLRB's decision.

When an employer is charged with a willful violation of a HIOSH standard and that alleged violation results in the death of an employee, HIOSH may ask the State Attorney General to seek criminal prosecution of the employer.

(Enclosure)

HIOSH FATALITY INSPECTIONS

The HIOSH inspects the worksites where fatalities have occurred to determine whether a violation of HIOSH safety and health standards occurred. These inspections are often comprehensive in nature, but at times may be limited to the area in which the fatality occurred. If HIOSH finds that the employer violated safety and health standards, the agency may issue citations and seek civil penalties against the employer, and may also refer the case to the State Attorney General for possible criminal prosecution.

The HIOSH does not issue citations solely because there was a workplace fatality. However, if during any inspection, HIOSH finds that the employer violated safety and health standards, the agency may issue citations and seek civil or criminal penalties against the employer.

Upon written request, HIOSH can release the portions of the inspection file normally available to release under the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) that are not restricted by Section 396-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and this information will be provided to next of kin without charge. In an effort to keep the next of kin apprised of developments during an inspection, HIOSH sends them copies of citations (the formal notice of alleged hazards in the workplace), appeal letters (the employer's notice of disagreement with the issued citations), and informal settlements (a binding agreement between HIOSH and the employer to settle the case) as soon as the document is issued. Furthermore, HIOSH is committed to the exchange of information with the next of kin as follows:

- Any time during the inspection or the resulting litigation, the next of kin may contact HIOSH to inquire about the status of the case or to ask questions.

- If the next of kin has information or evidence that can assist in the inspection, they are encouraged to take a proactive role and share this information by writing, calling or e-mailing HIOSH.

- The next of kin is encouraged to follow up and inquire about any information they have sent to HIOSH or on information received from HIOSH. In such cases, they are free to write or call HIOSH.

- Upon issuance of the final order, the next of kin will be afforded the opportunity to meet with the Administrator to answer questions and explain the settlement decision.

- The HIOSH will notify the next of kin when the case is closed. At that time, the portions of the file that can be released under UIPA that are not restricted be Section 396-14, HRS, will be made available to family members, at no charge, upon written request.

APPENDIX B

INSPECTION FINDINGS AND NEXT OF KIN CLOSURE LETTER – NO PROPOSED CITATIONS

Dear :

We are writing to share with you the findings of the recent Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) inspection into the death of your **[husband, mother, son, etc.]**.

[Insert one or two sentences on the workplace hazard(s) that may have contributed to accident or death if possible. For example, "OSHA's inspection determined that the trench Mr. Jones was working in was not properly sloped or shored and no cave-in protection such as a trench box was provided. Rain on the day of the accident and heavy equipment operating nearby increased the risk of cave-in."]

The HIOSH inspects the worksites where these tragedies have occurred to determine whether a violation of HIOSH safety and health standards occurred. These inspections are often comprehensive in nature, but at times are limited to the area in which the fatality occurred. If HIOSH finds that the employer violated safety and health standards, the agency may issue citations and seek civil penalties against the employer, and may also refer the case to the State Attorney General for possible criminal prosecution. However, HIOSH does not issue citations solely because there was a workplace fatality.

The HIOSH inspected the worksite(s) of **[name of company]** to determine whether a violation of HIOSH safety and health standards related to the accident had occurred. The workplace inspection found that no alleged violation(s) of safety and health standards had occurred related to the accident and, therefore, no citations or proposed penalties were issued to the employer.

Despite the inspection indicating that the employer did not violate safety and health standards, we know that no amount of money or compensation can measure the loss you and your family have suffered and your lives have been changed forever because of this tragedy. I would like to express to you my deepest sympathy.

Once the investigation file is closed and all administrative proceedings have been exhausted, portions of the investigation file that are subject to release under the Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) and not subject to Section 396-14, Hawaii Revised Statutes, may be made available upon request.

If you have any questions about our inspection, please contact me:

Administrator
Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 423
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 586-9116
E-Mail: dlir.hiosh@hawaii.gov

Sincerely,

Administrator

APPENDIX C

INSPECTION FINDINGS LETTER – PROPOSED CITATIONS

Dear :

We are writing to share with you the findings of the recent Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) inspection into the death of your **[husband, mother, son, etc.]**.

[Insert one or two sentences on the workplace hazard(s) that contributed to accident or death, if possible. For example, "OSHA's inspection determined that the trench Mr. Jones was working in was not properly sloped or shored and no cave-in protection such as a trench box was provided. Rain on the day of the accident and heavy equipment operating nearby increased the risk of cave-in."]

Enclosed is a copy of the citations and proposed penalties against **[name of company]**. The HIOSH citations state the alleged violations of safety and health standards at the worksite. They also note which alleged violations HIOSH has determined to be specifically associated with Mr./Ms. _____'s death.

We would like to emphasize that, under Chapter 396, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), civil penalties that HIOSH imposes are not based on the occurrence of a fatality. Instead, the gravity of the violation, which factors in severity of injury and probability of occurrence, is one consideration in penalty calculation. Penalties may be reduced from the maximum allowable by law based on the company's size and history of previous violations. In some cases, penalties may be reduced in exchange for a company's prompt correction of problems in order to protect other employees at the site and to resolve the hazards promptly.

Enclosed is a brief fact sheet that further explains HIOSH's citation and penalty policy and should help in understanding the citations. We know that no amount of money or compensation can measure the loss you and your family have suffered and your lives have been changed forever because of this tragedy. I would like to express to you my deepest sympathy. If you have any questions about our inspection or any of the information enclosed, please contact me:

Administrator
Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 423
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 586-9116
E-Mail: dlir.hiosh@hawaii.gov

The Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) and Section 396-14, HRS, govern the release of information concerning accident inspections conducted by HIOSH. The releasable portions of the file will be made available to you upon written request. The HIOSH's policy is to waive fees for UIPA requests in these circumstances.

Sincerely,

Administrator

Enclosures

APPENDIX D

NEXT OF KIN CLOSURE LETTER – PROPOSED CITATIONS

Dear :

We are writing to share with you the post-inspection and abatement results of the Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division (HIOSH) inspection into the death of your **[husband, mother, son, etc.]** and to inform you that the case has been closed as of the **[insert final order date]**.

[Insert one or two sentences to explain results of the final order and any abatement.]

We would like to emphasize that, under Chapter 396, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), any penalties proposed by HIOSH as a result of a citation are not based on the occurrence of a fatality. Instead, the gravity of the violation, which factors in severity of injury and probability of occurrence, is one consideration in penalty calculation.

The Uniform Information Practices Act (UIPA) and Section 396-14, HRS, governs the release of information concerning accident inspections conducted by HIOSH. Now that the inspection file is a final order, the releasable portions of the file will be made available to you upon written request. The HIOSH's policy is to waive fees for UIPA requests in these circumstances.

If you have any questions about our inspection, please contact me:

Administrator
Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Division
830 Punchbowl Street, Room 423
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Telephone: (808) 586-9116
E-Mail: dlir.hiosh@hawaii.gov

Again, I would like to express to you my deepest sympathy.

Sincerely,

Administrator

APPENDIX E
OSHA'S BASIC FATALITY INSPECTION COMMUNICATION PROCESS

PHASES	STAGES	ACTIONS
INITIAL COMMUNICATION	After accident and within 5 workdays of opening conference	Area Director Condolence Letter Appendix A
		Assistant Secretary Condolence Letter Appendix B
FOLLOW-UP COMMUNICATIONS	Throughout inspection	Periodic exchange of information with next of kin
	No proposed citations	
	Citations proposed	
POST-INSPECTION COMMUNICATIONS		Communicate inspection findings with next of kin
	No proposed citations	Inspection Findings & Next of Kin Closure Letter – No Proposed Citations Appendix C
	Confirmation of receipt of citations	Inspection Findings Letter – Proposed Citations Appendix D
	Case becomes final order	Next of Kin Closure Letter – Proposed Citations Appendix E