PART 1903-INSPECTIONS, CITATIONS AND PROPOSED PENALTIES

(§§ 1903.9 to 1903.11) - English version typeset from the official eCFR XML (version of October 16, 2026)

§ 1903.9 Trade secrets.

(a) Section 15 of the Act provides: "All information reported to or otherwise obtained by the Secretary or his representative in connection with any inspection or proceeding under this Act which contains or which might reveal a trade secret referred to in section 1905 of title 18 of the United States Code shall be considered confidential for the purpose of that section, except that such information may be disclosed to other officers or employees concerned with carrying out this Act or when relevant in any proceeding under this Act. In any such proceeding the Secretary, the Commission, or the court shall issue such orders as may be appropriate to protect the confidentiality of trade secrets." Section 15 of the Act is considered a statute within the meaning of section 552(b)(3) of title 5 of the United States Code, which exempts from the disclosure requirements matters that are "specifically exempted from disclosure by statute."

(b) Section 1905 of title 18 of the United States Code provides: "Whoever, being an officer or employee of the United States or of any department or agency thereof, publishes, divulges, discloses, or makes known in any manner or to any extent not authorized by law any information coming to him in the course of his employment or official duties or by reason of any examination or investigation made by, or return, report or record made to or filed with, such department or agency or officer or employee thereof, which information concerns or relates to the trade secrets, processes, operations, style of work, or apparatus, or to the identity, confidential statistical data, amount or source of any income, profits, losses, or expenditures of any person, firm, partnership, corporation, or association; or permits any income return or copy thereof or any book containing any abstract or particulars thereof to be seen or examined by any person except as provided by law; shall be fined not more than $1,000, or imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both; and shall be removed from office or employment."

(c) At the commencement of an inspection, the employer may identify areas in the establishment which contain or which might reveal a trade secret. If the Compliance Safety and Health Officer has no clear reason to question such identification, information obtained in such areas, including all negatives and prints of photographs, and environmental samples, shall be labeled "confidential-trade secret" and shall not be disclosed except in accordance with the provisions of section 15 of the Act.

(d) Upon the request of an employer, any authorized representative of employees under § 1903.8 in an area containing trade secrets shall be an employee in that area or an employee authorized by the employer to enter that area. Where there is no such representative or employee, the Compliance Safety and Health Officer shall consult with a reasonable number of employees who work in that area concerning matters of safety and health.

§ 1903.10 Consultation with employees.

Compliance Safety and Health Officers may consult with employees concerning matters of occupational safety and health to the extent they deem necessary for the conduct of an effective and thorough inspection. During the course of an inspection, any employee shall be afforded an opportunity to bring any violation of the Act which he has reason to believe exists in the workplace to the attention of the Compliance Safety and Health Officer.

§ 1903.11 Complaints by employees.

(a) Any employee or representative of employees who believe that a violation of the Act exists in any workplace where such employee is employed may request an inspection of such workplace by giving notice of the alleged violation to the Area Director or to a Compliance Safety and Health Officer. Any such notice shall be reduced to writing, shall set forth with reasonable particularity the grounds for the notice, and shall be signed by the employee or representative of employees. A copy shall be provided the employer or his agent by the Area Director or Compliance Safety and Health Officer no later than at the time of inspection, except that, upon the request of the person giving such notice, his name and the names of individual employees referred to therein shall not appear in such copy or on any record published, released, or made available by the Department of Labor.

(b) If upon receipt of such notification the Area Director determines that the complaint meets the requirements set forth in paragraph (a) of this section, and that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the alleged violation exists, he shall cause an inspection to be made as soon as practicable, to determine if such alleged violation exists. Inspections under this section shall not be limited to matters referred to in the complaint.

(c) Prior to or during any inspection of a workplace, any employee or representative of employees employed in such workplace may notify the Compliance Safety and Health Officer, in writing, of any violation of the Act which they have reason to believe exists in such workplace. Any such notice shall comply with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) Section 11(c)(1) of the Act provides: "No person shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee because such employee has filed any complaint or instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this Act or has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or because of the exercise by such employee on behalf of himself or others of any right afforded by this Act."

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1218-0064)

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