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OSHA, EPA and the Aviation Industry

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OSHA, EPA and the Aviation Industry

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as well as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have exclusive and discrete goals. However, it is crucial to point out that both share a common objective, to benefit individuals and the environment. EPA is mandated with the protection of the environment and human health. On the other hand, OSHA has the mandate to protect employee's health and safety. According to the United States Department of Labor, OSHA and EPA must work in collaboration to guarantee effective protection of labor force, community and environment (epa.gov, 2021). This paper aims to highlight the variances between EPA and OSHA, their significance to air travel safety and the economic influence the two entities have on the aviation sector.

OSHA was established in 1970 to guarantee safety of workers and a healthy working environment at the job site. OSHA covers all workers operating in America, except those who work in environments already covered by federal agencies under the national government statutes (osha.gov, n.d). In the aviation industry, OSHA standards are clear under an airline's safety program. For example, when working on a flight line, protective gear like safety glasses, hearing protection, and steel toe boots must be available under the OSHA protection criteria. OSHA requires constant hearing checks for workers in a noisy environment. Furthermore, there are guidelines laid down by OSHA on how to handle hazardous material like jet fuel, batteries among others (osha.gov, n.d). OSHA has an elaborate hazard communication standard that all airline workers handling hazardous material undergo training on their proper use. Besides, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be available at the place of work for easy reference. As a result, OSHA standards ensure that all airline workers know the steps and risks involved to minimize negative consequences at the workplace.

Contrarily, EPA was also established in 1970 to allow government activities on behalf of the environment. The EPA is concerned with regulating how hazardous material gets disposed of in the environment. The EPA directly impacts the aviation industry because many aspects of the industry fall under this category. For instance, Aircraft painting and cleaning, leaks and spills from fuel storage tanks, acids that leak from the aircraft batteries, and the glycol used in deicing among others. The EPA comes up with guidelines to ensure that such hazardous materials are properly disposed of in a manner that does not harm the environment.

Consequently, the EPA sets rules that limit airlines from polluting the environment (epa.gov, 2021). Most of the standards under the EPA come from the Clean Air Act. These standards regulate the volumes of substances that airline companies can release into the environment. The major concern of EPA is the health effects of these substances in the environment. For that reason, the EPA sets limits on the amount of carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and lead that airlines can release into the environment. In this regard, if an airline is producing a lot of contaminated air, for example, through a welding operation and discharging it outside, it might be cited for breaking EPA regulations. Failure to comply with the set regulations may attract penalties and fines that may be economically unbearable for some airlines. OSHA has offices both at the local and national levels and inspects airline facilities in a bid to help employers enforce some of the required guidelines in instances where there is non-compliance. Normally, the economic impact of non-compliance with the set standards is likely to attract huge fines.

In conclusion, both OSHA and EPA have strict guidelines covering different aspects of the aviation industry. Failure to follow these guidelines may accumulate costly fines that have a tremendous economic impact on the industry.

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