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New OSHA program targets fatalities, injuries associated with automotive lifts

HONOLULU – To reduce injuries and fatalities associated with the operation of automotive lifts, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration is launching a local emphasis program in Hawaii, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa in July.

OSHA compliance offices will begin conducting inspections to identify and evaluate hazards of lifts used in the automotive industry. Inspections will be conducted at randomly selected sites in general operations within targeted industries, such as: automobile dealers; automotive repair and maintenance shops; gasoline stations; and automotive parts, accessories and tire stores. In addition, OSHA will respond to complaints, referrals and fatalities related to operations where automotive lifts are used.

"Workers in the automotive industry are exposed to crushing hazards from automotive lifts when servicing and repairing vehicles," said Ken Atha, OSHA's Regional Administrator in the West. "These hazardous risks can be limited by properly maintaining automotive lifts and providing workers with effective training regarding inspection and use of lifts."

Most of OSHA's inspections for automotive lifts result from un-programmed work initiated by complaints, referrals and incidents. Since 2007, according to OSHA's Fatality and Catastrophe Investigation Summary database, OSHA has conducted several automotive lift inspections, 11 of which resulted from fatalities. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, a total of 15,000 workers were treated in hospitals for automotive lift, jack or jack stand injuries. By targeting inspection activity to employers in the automotive industry, OSHA hopes to reduce the injury and fatality rates of employers who use these devices.

Employers and employees with questions regarding workplace safety and health standards may call OSHA's Honolulu Area Office at 808-541-2680. Small businesses also may request assistance at no charge from the Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Consultation Program at 808-586-9100 or by email at dliir.hiosh@hawaii.gov.