

Chapter 517

(Senate Bill 818)

AN ACT concerning

Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Act – Voluntary Protection Program

FOR the purpose of establishing a certain Voluntary Protection Program in the Division of Labor and Industry; requiring the Commissioner of Labor and Industry to recognize certain employers under the Program; specifying the purpose of the Program; requiring an employer who wishes to participate in the Program to submit a certain application; requiring the Commissioner to establish the contents of the application form as well as certain other documentation; authorizing the Commissioner to conduct certain evaluations for certain purposes; providing that an employer's continued participation in the Program is contingent on certain factors; exempting a place of employment that participates in the Program from certain inspections to the extent allowed under certain provisions of law, except under certain circumstances; requiring the Commissioner to adopt certain regulations to implement the Program; authorizing a certain place of employment to continue participation in the Program under certain circumstances; defining a certain term; and generally relating to a Voluntary Protection Program under the Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Act.

BY adding to

Article – Labor and Employment

Section 5–1001 through 5–1004 to be under the new subtitle “Subtitle 10. Voluntary Protection Program”

Annotated Code of Maryland
(2016 Replacement Volume)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Labor and Employment

SUBTITLE 10. VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM.

5–1001.

IN THIS SUBTITLE, “PROGRAM” MEANS THE VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM ESTABLISHED UNDER § 5–1002 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

5–1002.

(A) (1) THERE IS A VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM IN THE DIVISION OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY.

(2) UNDER THE PROGRAM, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL RECOGNIZE EMPLOYERS WITH PLACES OF EMPLOYMENT IN WHICH AN EXEMPLARY, VOLUNTARILY IMPLEMENTED WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED THAT EXCEEDS BASIC COMPLIANCE WITH OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH LAWS AND REGULATIONS.

(B) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM IS TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATING EMPLOYERS TO HAVE EXEMPLARY WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAMS.

(C) AN EMPLOYER WHO WISHES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM SHALL SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO THE COMMISSIONER FOR APPROVAL.

(D) THE COMMISSIONER SHALL ESTABLISH THE CONTENTS OF THE APPLICATION FORM, AS WELL AS OTHER DOCUMENTATION THAT THE COMMISSIONER MAY REQUIRE.

5-1003.

(A) IN EVALUATING AN EMPLOYER'S APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM, THE COMMISSIONER MAY CONDUCT AN ON-SITE EVALUATION OF THE EMPLOYER'S PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT.

(B) AFTER THE APPROVAL OF AN EMPLOYER'S APPLICATION FOR PARTICIPATION, THE EMPLOYER'S CONTINUED PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM IS CONTINGENT ON THE EMPLOYER'S COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSIONER UNDER § 5-1004 OF THIS SUBTITLE, AS DETERMINED BY PERIODIC ON-SITE EVALUATIONS BY THE COMMISSIONER.

(C) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, DURING THE PERIOD IN WHICH THE EMPLOYER IS A PARTICIPANT IN THE PROGRAM, THE EMPLOYER'S PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT IS EXEMPT FROM OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH INSPECTIONS CONDUCTED BY THE COMMISSIONER UNDER TITLE 5, SUBTITLE 2 OF ~~THE LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT ARTICLE~~ THIS ARTICLE, TO THE EXTENT ALLOWED BY FEDERAL LAW AND REGULATIONS.

(D) NOTWITHSTANDING AN EMPLOYER'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM, A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT IS NOT EXEMPT FROM INSPECTIONS OR INVESTIGATIONS THAT ARISE FROM COMPLAINTS, REFERRALS, CATASTROPHES, FATALITIES, ACCIDENTS, OR SIGNIFICANT TOXIC CHEMICAL RELEASES.

5-1004.

(A) THE COMMISSIONER SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM.

(B) THE REGULATIONS ADOPTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL INCLUDE REQUIREMENTS FOR:

(1) EVIDENCE OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP IN THE AREA OF OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, ALONG WITH ACTIVE AND MEANINGFUL EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT;

(2) COMPREHENSIVE HAZARD PREVENTION, MITIGATION, AND CONTROL PROGRAMS;

(3) SYSTEMATIC ASSESSMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS;

(4) EMPLOYEE SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAINING; AND

(5) SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM EVALUATION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That a place of employment participating in the Voluntary Protection Program within the Division of Labor and Industry on September 30, 2017, may continue its participation in the Voluntary Protection Program administered under this Act without having to submit an application as required under § 5-1002(c) of the Labor and Employment Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act, or undergoing an on-site evaluation as required under § 5-1003(a) of the Labor and Employment Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2017.

Approved by the Governor, May 4, 2017.