2026 Federal OSHA Penalty Update

Federal OSHA did not increase its maximum civil penalties for inflation in 2026. The 2025 maximums remain in effect, while some minimum proposed penalties changed under OSHA's revised penalty policy. The amounts below apply to federal OSHA; employers in state plan states should check their state agency's current penalty schedule.

2026 Federal OSHA Maximum Penalties

Violation type	Maximum proposed penalty
Serious	$16,550 per violation
Other than serious	$16,550 per violation
Posting requirements	$16,550 per violation
Willful or repeated	$165,514 per violation
Failure to abate	$16,550 per day beyond the abatement date

Why the amounts stayed the same

The October 2025 consumer price index data required for the annual federal inflation calculation was unavailable. OSHA therefore kept the 2025 maximum penalty levels for 2026. A cited employer's proposed penalty depends on the violation and applicable adjustments; the listed maximum is not an automatic fine.

What changed in penalty reductions

OSHA's July 2025 policy expanded the group eligible for its maximum general size reduction of 70% from employers with 10 or fewer employees to those with up to 25. It also increased the potential history reduction from 10% to 20%, subject to eligibility. OSHA may consider size, inspection history, good faith, and prompt hazard correction when calculating a proposed penalty.

What employers should do

Inspect worksites and equipment, correct hazards promptly, document training and corrective actions, and review written safety programs. If OSHA cites a hazard, address it by the stated abatement date; a failure to abate can lead to additional daily penalties.

KARM Safety Solutions provides safety training, workplace inspections, safety program development and review, and ongoing support. Contact KARM to discuss your workplace safety needs.

Sources: OSHA, 2026 Annual Adjustments to OSHA Civil Penalties (May 21, 2026); OSHA, Updated Penalty Guidelines (July 14, 2025).