

OSHA ain't just blowing smoke on whistleblowing

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has ordered Chino, California-based Mr. Good Vape to reinstate a manager who reported alleged violations of federal safety laws in its production process.

In addition, the order requires the employer to pay the manager \$110,000.

The manager believed the company's process for creating flavored liquids for its e-cigarette vapor inhalers violated federal law. He reported his concerns to the California Department of Environmental Protection. When the company learned of the report, it suspended him and then terminated him.

OSHA investigators determined the Toxic Substances Control Act and the Solid Waste Disposal Act protected the manager's whistleblowing activities.

Note: Firing a whistleblower is a bad move. Employers should make it clear employees will not be retaliated against for internally raising legitimate complaints. This allows employers to resolve safety problems before regulators become involved.