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Governor seeks more leeway for OSHA

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Gov. Linda Lingle yesterday said she is working on a way to make the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health Administration more business-friendly.

This includes working with federal officials to allow the agency more leeway to issue warnings rather than citations for minor infractions, such as operating a vehicle with an inoperable horn or using an extension cord to plug in a fan.



LINDA LINGLE

"The way that (the department) has conducted itself in the past, it's as if only they want a safe workplace and all of you were out there trying to create unsafe conditions," Lingle told an audience at the Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i's annual luncheon.

Lingle also touched on several other changes during her seven-month tenure as governor that are aimed at delivering on campaign pledges to create a more business-friendly government.

Among these were:

- Allowing certain professionals such as nurses to renew their licenses via the Internet. Plans also are under way to allow businesses to register with the state and get tax identification numbers online within the next year.
- Signing a bill that removes healthcare insurers HMSA and Kaiser Permanente from the Prepaid Health Care Advisory Council. Their presence on the council, which recommends or rejects efforts by Mainland healthcare providers to enter the Hawai'i market, has been criticized as preventing competition for healthcare.
- Directing agencies to cooperate with a board charged with reviewing new and existing regulations for their impact on small businesses. The board had been largely ignored by state agencies in the past.