

OSHA Safety Training Introduction



The mission of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is to send every worker home whole and healthy every day. Since the agency was established in 1971, workplace fatalities have been cut by 62 percent and occupational injury and illness rates have declined 40 percent. At the same time, U.S. employment has nearly doubled from 56 million workers at 3.5 million worksites to 115 million workers at nearly 7 million sites.

OSHA encourages employers and employees to work together to:

- Reduce workplace hazards and implement or improve safety and health programs
- Develop and enforce mandatory job standards in the areas of occupational safety and health
- Maintain a reporting and recordkeeping system to monitor job-related illnesses and injuries
- Provide assistance, training and other support programs to help employees and workers.

Since its implementation in 1971, OSHA has:

- Helped cut work-related fatalities nearly in half
- Helped reduce workplace injuries and illnesses by 40 percent
- Almost eliminated the once-common brown-lung disease from the textile industry
- Cut excavation and trenching fatalities by more than a third

Some of the strategies OSHA has developed to help mitigate workplace problems include:

- Encouraging employers and employees to implement or improve safety and health programs
- Developing and enforcing mandatory job safety and health standards
- Maintaining a reporting and recordkeeping system to track job-related illnesses and injuries
- Providing assistance and training programs to help protect the interests of both workers and employers



When there is no apparent OSHA Standard governing a particular situation, employers are required to adhere to the **OSH Act's General Duty Clause**, as follows:

Each employer "shall furnish . . . a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees."

Any employer with 11 or more employees is required to keep records of all occupational illnesses and injuries.

Recordkeeping forms must be maintained on a calendar year basis. A summary of the records for the previous year must be posted from February until the end of April.

In addition, the records must be kept on-site for 5 years and must be readily available for inspection, by OSHA or by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) or the BLS.

What Are Workers' Responsibilities?

- Read the OSHA poster
- Follow the employer's safety and health rules
- Wear or use all required gear and equipment
- Follow safe work practices for your job, as per your employer
- Report hazardous conditions to your supervisor or safety committee
- If hazardous conditions are not fixed, report them to OSHA
- Cooperate with OSHA inspectors

What Are Worker's Rights?

Section 11(c) of the OSH Act entitles you to take the following actions without fear of reprisal from your employer:

- Identify and correct problems in the workplace, working as much as possible with your employer.
- Notify OSHA about working conditions that are a threat to your health and/or safety. You can make this notification in person or by fax, email, postal mail, or through OSHA's Web site.

What Are an Employer's Rights and Responsibilities?

The OSH Act grants employers important rights, particularly during and after an OSHA inspection. For instance, OSHA is obliged to maintain the confidentiality of an employer's trade secrets. Employers and employees can submit information or comments to OSHA on the issuance, modification, or revocation of OSHA standards and request a public hearing.

When inspections are conducted, the OSHA inspector (CSHO) looks for conditions in the following order, according to priority:

- **Imminent Danger** - Any condition where there is a reasonable certainty that a danger exists that can be expected to cause death or serious physical harm immediately, or before the danger can be eliminated through normal enforcement procedures.
- **Fatalities and Catastrophes** – Any condition resulting in hospitalization of three or more employees.
- **Employee Complaints/Referrals**
- **Programmed High-Hazard Inspections**
- **Follow-ups to previous inspections**