



Intro to OSHA 101

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Lesson: 1/20

What is OSHA?

Occupational
Safety
& **H**ealth
Administration

OSHA establishes mandatory standards as well as voluntary guidelines for job safety and health. It also helps companies develop safety programs, provides training to employers and their employees, and establishes partnerships with other groups to promote safety. OSHA enforces its standards through worksite inspections that can result in citations and monetary penalties. OSHA also responds to accidents and workplace complaints.

OSHA Coverage

Most private sector employers and employees in the United States are covered by OSHA, including all states, territories, and jurisdictions, such as the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

However, there are some employees who do not fall under OSHA standards, including:

- The self-employed.
- Farming families that do not employ outside workers.
- The public sector employees of some state and local governments.
- Employees of occupations covered by other federal agencies or statutes, such as mining and atomic energy workers.

Employers and employees are covered either directly through the federal OSH Act or through a federally approved state program. State programs are required to be at least as effective as the federal program, and in some cases they are stricter. It is always the employer's responsibility to contact OSHA to determine which plan and standards are applicable.



Figure 1: Mining is covered by a federal agency outside of OSHA.

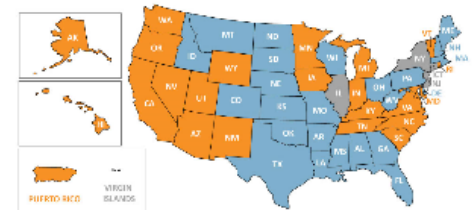


Figure 2: The states in orange use state safety programs.

OSHA Standards

OSHA standards are requirements employers must follow to help keep employees safe in their work environments. It is the employer's responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace and be familiar with any applicable standards.

OSHA can create a standard based on their own initiative or in response to another group or individual. OSHA uses the Federal Register to publish its intention to propose, amend, or revoke a standard. In cases where workers are in grave danger, OSHA can issue an emergency temporary standard that takes effect until a permanent standard is in place.

The OSH Act's general duty clause states: "Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees," even if no specific standard exists that addresses the hazards. Employers are also required to warn employees of potential hazards. Certain criteria must be met before OSHA can issue a citation based on the general duty clause.



Figure 1: Guard walls help to prevent falls.

1	Fall Protection
2	Hazard Communication
3	Scaffolding
4	Respiratory Protection
5	Electrical: Wiring Methods
6	Powered Industrial Trucks
7	Ladders
8	Lockout/Tagout
9	Electrical: Systems Design
10	Machine Guarding

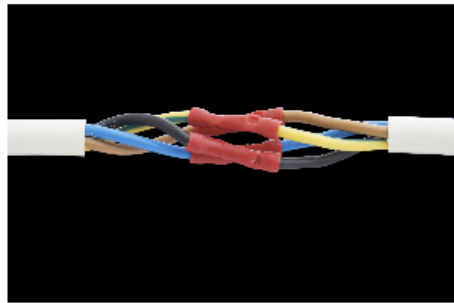
Figure 2: The top ten most cited OSHA standards.

Lesson: 4/20

Hazards



Toxic substances and hazardous materials, such as caustic chemicals, flammable liquids, and airborne contaminants.



Electrical hazards, such as exposed wires, damp locations, and spliced cables.



Fall hazards, such as wet surfaces, holes, or missing handrails.



Missing or malfunctioning emergency response systems and equipment, such as fire doors, sprinkler systems, and fire extinguishers.



Mechanical hazards, such as missing machine guards, improperly mounted tools, and broken switches.

Lesson: 5/20

Reviewing OSHA Basics

- **Standards:** Mandatory health and safety laws that employers must follow or face punishment.
- **Guidelines:** Voluntary health and safety rules that employers may decide to follow.
- **Hazards:** Workplace conditions that may cause harm to employees.
- **State programs:** Must be as strict or stricter than the federal OSHA program.
- **OSH Act:** Directly covers most private-sector employees across the U.S.

Lesson: 6/20

Compliance



The OSH Act gives compliance officers the right to conduct a thorough inspection, including the authority to:

- Enter any area of any workplace where work is being performed.
- Investigate conditions, machines, structures, materials, and other pertinent workplace components, both during and after regular working hours.
- Privately question any employer, owner, operator, agent, or a reasonable number of employees during an inspection or investigation.

Most employers will permit the compliance officer to enter the worksite, but they do have the right to refuse entry. In that case, compliance officers will obtain an inspection warrant or search warrant to enter the workplace. Additionally, if machinery is not running at the time of inspection, employers do not have to demonstrate the machinery's functionality.

Inspection Priorities

Because OSHA covers over 7 million workplaces per year, the agency must prioritize inspections:

- Imminent danger situations are issues that could result in fatality or serious injury and are the top priority. If the hazard cannot be immediately corrected, compliance officers will ask employers to remove employees.
- Fatalities and catastrophes are accidents involving the death or hospitalization of three or more employees and are given top priority for inspection. Employers must report such catastrophes to OSHA within eight hours of the incident.
- Complaints are employee reports of hazardous conditions or OSHA violations. They are the next priority for inspection. Employees may request to file these complaints anonymously.
- Referrals come from sources outside of a workplace. Other federal, state, or local agencies, as well as the media, may alert OSHA to hazardous conditions at a worksite.
- Follow-ups receive the next priority. In addition to investigating new reports or issues, OSHA performs inspections to confirm the resolution of past violations.
- Planned or programmed inspections fall last on the priority list. Once greater hazards are resolved, OSHA conducts routine inspections directed at high-hazard industries or individual worksites with a history of high accident rates.



Figure 1: Catastrophes involve death or serious injuries, such as shattered bones.



Figure 2: Oil and gas drilling is a high-hazard industry.

Onsite Inspections: Steps



- Preparation: OSHA compliance officers research a worksite's inspection history, review the type of operations in use, and consult relevant standards.
- Presentation: The compliance officer shows his or her credentials.
- Opening conference: The officer explains why the employer or worksite was chosen for an inspection, describes the scope of the inspection, and obtains information about the workplace. This is when the employer will have the opportunity to select company representatives to accompany the compliance officer during the inspection.
- Walkaround: The officer may examine all or part of the workplace for potential hazards and consult with a reasonable number of employees.
- Closing conference: The officer discusses hazardous conditions as well as the employer's rights in the event of a citation.

Lesson: 9/20

Onsite Inspections: Employee Involvement

Employees are part of OSHA's inspection process and can be questioned by the compliance officer during the walkaround. An employee representative may accompany the inspector during the walkaround, though this is not required.

If a workplace has an employee safety committee or union, that group may choose the employee representative. Otherwise, the employees as a whole or the OSHA compliance officer will determine if there is a suitable employee. When there is no authorized employee representative, the compliance officer must consult with a reasonable number of employees about safety issues. The closing conference usually includes both the employer and employees. However, at the employee's request, the compliance officer may hold a separate closing conference without the employer present. At this time, the officer can discuss pertinent safety issues and inform the employees of their rights.



Figure 1:



Figure 2:

Lesson: 10/20

OSHA Inspections

1. It is illegal to notify an employer that they are going to be inspected by OSHA. **TRUE**
2. It is required that an employee representative accompany the compliance officer during the inspection walkaround. **FALSE**
3. Employee complaints of hazards or OSHA violations take priority over follow-up inspections for past violations. **TRUE**
4. The opening conference consists of the compliance officer showing their credentials. **FALSE**
5. Employees may request a closing conference separate from the employer. **TRUE**

Employer Responsibilities



Though specific safety strategies vary from one facility to another, employers must maintain a workplace free of identified hazards and must comply with OSHA standards. All employers, both federally covered and those under state-run safety programs, must follow requirements in four basic categories:

- General requirements are the minimum standards for workplace safety, including evaluating workplace conditions, keeping the workplace free from recognized hazards, and cooperating with OSHA compliance officers.
- Employer requirements include warning workers about safety hazards, providing medical treatment when needed, paying for and providing personal protective equipment (PPE), and conducting safety training.
- Paperwork and recordkeeping requirements include displaying OSHA information posters, procedures, and citations; keeping reports of accidents and illness; and providing copies of OSHA standards to employees who request them.
- Hazard requirements include minimizing or eliminating potential hazards, reporting actual accidents and fatalities, and correcting cited violations.

Employer Rights

OSHA's requirements are mandatory for every employer covered by the OSH Act, but OSHA specifically outlines a number of rights for employers. Employers also have the right to:

- Be advised about the reason for an inspection.
- Accompany the compliance officer on an inspection.
- Apply for a variance from a standard under certain circumstances.
- File a notice of contest to dispute inspection results.
- Be assured of the confidentiality of trade secrets.
- Take an active role in developing safety and health programs.
- Request information about potentially toxic effects of substances used in the workplace.
- Deny entry to OSHA representatives without a court order.
- Ask for advice and an onsite consultation from OSHA.

Employers are allowed to submit information and comments to OSHA or request a public hearing when standards are issued, modified, or revoked. Often, this occurs when employers believe that the standard will cause a substantial financial burden when compared with the benefits of the standard.



Figure 1: Employers may accompany the compliance officer on an inspection.



Figure 2: Employers may apply for a variance or file a notice of contest.

Employee Responsibilities



- Read OSHA's "It's the Law" poster, which employers must display at the jobsite.
- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Follow all lawful employer safety and health rules and regulations.
- Wear or use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) while engaged in work.
- Report hazardous conditions to the supervisor.
- Report any job-related injury or illness to the employer and seek prompt treatment.
- Cooperate with the OSHA compliance officer conducting an inspection.
- Exercise employee rights under the OSH Act in a responsible manner.

Employee Rights



Whistleblower protections are also available under more than a dozen federal statutes, including the Clean Air Act and the Toxic Substances Control Act. These laws can protect some employees who report their employers for violations. Employees also have the right to:

- Request an OSHA investigation if hazardous conditions or violations of standards are taking place.
- Have names withheld from the employer when filing a complaint.
- Be advised of OSHA actions regarding the complaint and have an informal review of any decision not to inspect or issue a citation.
- Have an authorized employee representative accompany the OSHA compliance officer during inspection.
- Be notified by the employer if the employer applies for a variance, testifies at a variance hearing, or appeals the final decision.

Lesson: 15/20

Rights and Responsibilities

Employer Rights

- Apply for a variance from a standard.
- Be assured of trade secret confidentiality.
- Deny entry to OSHA reps with no court order.

Employer Responsibilities

- Pay for and provide PPE and medical treatment.
- Keep records and reports of workplace accidents.
- Keep the workplace free of recognized hazards.

Employee Rights

- File an anonymous complaint or report to OSHA.
- Be notified if a variance application is filed.

Employee Responsibilities

- Read the OSHA "It's the Law" poster.
- Wear or use appropriate PPE.
- Report hazards to a supervisor.

Lesson: 16/20

Variations

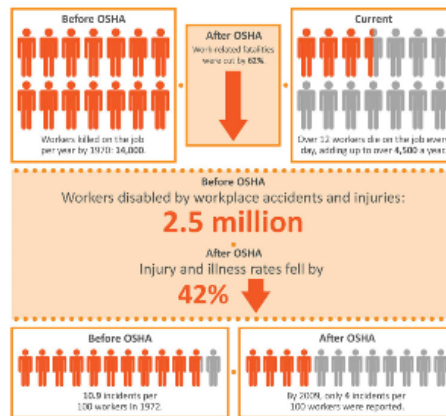


A temporary variance applies to an employer that cannot comply with a standard by its effective date, due to a lack of equipment, personnel, or time to complete the modification. Under a temporary variance, an employer must meet alternative OSHA guidelines until they attain compliance.

A permanent variance is granted if an employer can prove that the working conditions, processes, or other practices at the jobsite are as safe as they would be if the employer complied with the standard.

An experimental variance may be granted to an employer who is making an effort to demonstrate or validate new job safety and health techniques. However, the experiment must first be approved by the Secretary of Labor or the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

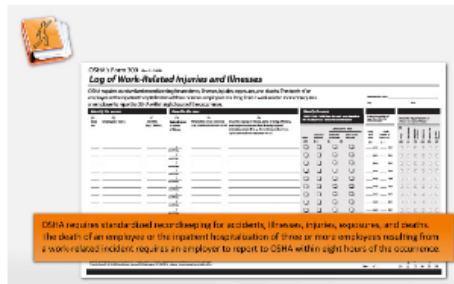
Statistics and Reporting



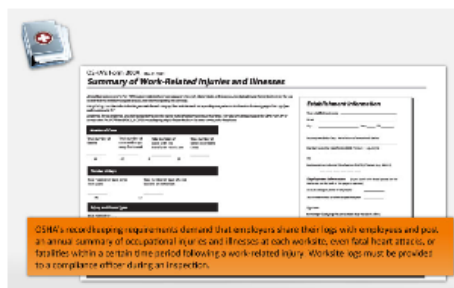
OSHA's recordkeeping requirements demand that employers display form 300A, which summarizes occupational injuries and illnesses at each worksite. All injury and illness records must be provided, upon request, to the compliance officer during an inspection. If a work-related incident results in the death of an employee, the employer must report to OSHA within eight hours of the occurrence. If an incident requires hospitalization or the loss of an employee's eye or limb, the employer must report to OSHA within twenty-four hours of the occurrence.

OSHA collects annual survey data from specific employers, but employers do not have to report to OSHA unless asked. Recordkeeping allows OSHA to compile statistics, identify high-hazard industries, and inform employees about their worksite's safety record. Employers can also use records to target potential sources of injury at their worksites.

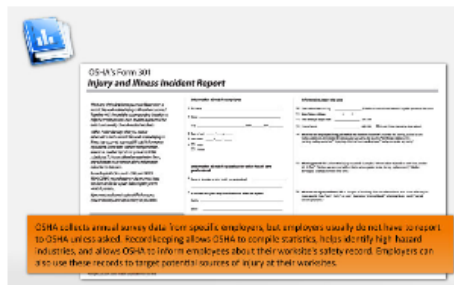
Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses



OSHA requires standardized recordkeeping for accidents, illnesses, injuries, exposures, and deaths. If a work-related incident results in the death of an employee or the inpatient hospitalization of three or more employees, the employer must report to OSHA within eight hours of the occurrence.



OSHA's recordkeeping requirements demand that employers display form 300A, which summarizes occupational injuries and illnesses, at each worksite. All injury and illness records must be provided, upon request, to the compliance officer during an inspection.



OSHA collects annual survey data from specific employers, but employers do not have to report to OSHA unless asked. Recordkeeping allows OSHA to compile statistics, identify high-hazard industries, and advise OSHA to inform employees about their worksite's safety record. Employers can also use records to target potential sources of injury at their worksites.

Information and Training

OSHA has a number of education and training options, from onsite training of floor-level employees to advanced offsite training of safety professionals.

OSHA's primary system of training employees is the OSHA Outreach Training Program. Outreach training is available as 10-hour or 30-hour courses in construction, general industry, maritime, or disaster site safety and health standards. Authorized OSHA trainers for this program are required to have several years of safety experience and must complete two OSHA trainer courses. Trainers issue OSHA course completion cards for employees who complete the courses. In addition, OSHA Training Institute Education Centers located across the country can provide more specific or advanced training.

OSHA also publishes a number of materials on its standards, compliance rules, and general safety topics. These materials include books, pamphlets, posters, and videos. Information on OSHA publications is available through the OSHA website at www.osha.gov.



Figure 1:



Figure 2:

Lesson: 20/20

Final Review

1. If a work-related injury causes an employee to take time off, the employer must record the injury. **TRUE**
2. All injury and illness records must be submitted to OSHA within the day they are created. **FALSE**
3. A temporary variance is granted to employers who are testing out new safety techniques. **FALSE**
4. OSHA can penalize employees who do not follow their employer's company safety policy. **TRUE**
5. Both the employer and an employee have the right to accompany the compliance officer on a walkaround. **TRUE**
6. Employers have the right to keep applications for a variance secret from their employees. **FALSE**

Class Vocabulary

Clean Air Act A United States federal law which specifies the standards for air quality and the control of air pollution. Enacted in 1970, the Clean Air Act was amended in 1977 and 1990.

Closing Conference The final step of an OSHA compliance inspection. During the closing conference, the compliance officer discusses the hazards discovered during the inspection.

Compliance Officers An OSHA representative who enforces OSHA standards. Compliance officers conduct inspections and investigations.

Compliance Program The program through which OSHA enforces its standards. Inspection is at the center of the compliance program.

Department Of Labor The U.S. cabinet department in charge of work-related issues. The Department of Labor exists to foster workers' welfare, improve working conditions, and promote opportunities for profitable employment.

Establishment A single physical location where business is conducted or where services are performed. One employer may have multiple establishments.

Experimental Variance A limited exception to or temporary deviation from an OSHA standard. Experimental variances are granted for the purposes of testing new, alternative methods of compliance.

Fire Doors Fire-resistant doors designed to prevent the spread of flames between rooms or other sections of a building. Fire doors are part of emergency response systems.

Flammable An object or substance that can quickly catch fire. Flammable items ignite at low temperatures.

Form 300A An OSHA form that summarizes annual work-related injuries and illnesses. Form 300A allows employees to see injury and illness numbers for their workplace.

General Duty Clause A statement within the OSH Act that covers situations for which there is no specific standard. The general duty clause requires employers to furnish places of employment that are free from recognized hazards to the health and safety of their employees.

Guidelines OSHA recommendations to follow a particular practice or method. Guidelines do not incur penalties for non-compliance.

Hazards A source of potential danger to a worker's health and safety. Hazards include harmful substances and missing machine guards.

Jobsite The physical location where a job is performed. A jobsite may be a building, facility, or temporary work location such as a construction site.

Light Duty Decreased or modified job duties required due to a medical condition. Light duty allows an employee to heal from an injury, illness, or surgery.

Machine Guards A shield or device covering hazardous areas of a machine. Machine guards may prevent contact with body parts or control hazards, like chips, from exiting the machine.

Occupational Safety And Health Administration OSHA. A government agency under the U.S. Dept. of Labor that sets the standards for working conditions in the United States. OSHA ensures that employees work in safe and healthy environments.

OSH Act The Occupational Safety and Health Act. The OSH Act was passed in 1970 to assure safe and healthful working conditions through standards, enforcement, research, information, education, and training.

OSHA Outreach Training Program OSHA's primary system of training employees in the basics of occupational safety and health. The OSHA Outreach Training Program provides two certification levels in four different subject areas.

OSHA Training Institute Education Centers	OTI Education Centers. Independently run, non-profit regional training centers that perform OSHA-approved safety training. OTI Education Centers certify outreach trainers and provide training on advanced topics.
Permanent Variance	A constant, unchanging exception or allowed deviation from an OSHA standard that has a continuous duration. Permanent variances are granted if the workplace is as safe as it would be under the standard.
Personal Protective Equipment	PPE. Any item that workers wear or use to prevent injury in the workplace. Safety glasses are common personal protective equipment.
Private Sector	All employers that are separate from the government. The private sector includes most companies and businesses.
Public Sector	Any employer that is a department or agency of the government. The public sector includes any employee whose wages are paid by taxes.
Recordable Incident	Any injury or illness that must be recorded under OSHA standards. Recordable incidents are work-related and require medical attention beyond basic first aid.
Secretary Of Health And Human Services	Secretary of HHS. The head of the Department of Health and Human Services. The Secretary of HHS exerts control over the U.S. government agency charged with protecting the health of citizens.
Secretary Of Labor	The head of the Department of Labor. The Secretary of Labor exerts control over the department, and takes part in suggesting and enforcing laws.
Sprinkler Systems	A network of pipes, valves, and/or nozzles designed to prevent the spread of fire. Sprinkler systems automatically deliver water or other extinguishing material to an area where flames are present.
Standards	OSHA policy on a particular practice or method. OSHA standards have the same power as law, and non-compliance can result in fines and other penalties.
Temporary Variance	An exception or allowed deviation from an OSHA standard that has a limited duration. Temporary variances are granted to employers unable to comply with a standard by its effective date.
Toxic	Poisonous or harmful. Toxic substances may cause harm due to physical contact or inhalation.
Toxic Substances Control Act	TSCA. A U.S. federal law that regulates chemicals. Under the TSCA, the Environmental Protection Agency tests chemicals then creates and enforces restrictions based on their toxicity.
Variance	An exception to or allowed deviation from an OSHA standard. Variances are granted to employers who are unable to meet a standard or who have provided approved alternative safety measures.
Variance	An exception to or allowed deviation from an OSHA standard. Variances are granted to employers who are unable to meet a standard, or who have provided approved alternative safety measures.
Walkaround	The portion of an OSHA compliance inspection during which the compliance officer physically examines the workplace. Walkarounds allow the officer to inspect for hazards and speak with employees.
Whistleblower	An employee who reports or otherwise exposes possible wrongdoing at his or her workplace. Whistleblowers are protected under some labor laws.