

**2026 NORTHEAST
SAFETY CONFERENCE**

**Understanding OSHA:
What Every Employer
Needs to Know**



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OSHA

INTRODUCTION TO OHSA'S COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE AND COOPERTIVE PRGRAMS

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DISCLAIMER

- This information has been developed by an OSHA Compliance Assistance Specialist and is intended to assist employers, workers, and others improve workplace health and safety. While we attempt to thoroughly address specific topics [or hazards], it is not possible to include discussion of everything necessary to ensure a healthy and safe working environment in this presentation. This information is a tool for addressing workplace hazards and is not an exhaustive statement of an employer's legal obligations, which are defined by statute, regulations, and standards. This document does not have the force and effect of law and is not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies. It does not create (or diminish) legal obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Finally, OSHA may modify rules and related interpretations in light of new technology, information, or circumstances; to keep apprised of such developments, or to review information on a wide range of occupational safety and health topics, you can visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov.

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A LOOK BACK, PRE-OSHA

- Prior to the signing of the OSH Act approximately 38 workers a day were dying on the job a day
- Although there is still more work to be done, that number has fallen to 15 per day

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WHAT IS OSHA?

- OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration)
- One of the Agencies under the Department of Labor
- Created by the OSH Act of 1970 signed into law by President Nixon

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WHAT DOES OSHA DO?

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is responsible for enforcing the provisions set forth in the OSH Act of 1970
 - Investigates allegations of safety and health hazards at workplaces
 - Investigates allegations of retaliation (Whistleblower)
 - Provide funding and oversight of consultation programs
 - Provide safety and health education and training information

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WHY DO I NEED A SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM?

- Companies with robust safety and health programs experience:
 - Lower WCI costs
 - Lower turnover rates
 - Higher production
 - Lower equipment expenses

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

- Voluntary Protection program (VPP)
- OSHA Strategic Partnership Program (OSPP)
- Alliances
- OSHA Challenge

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VPP

- The Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) promote effective worksite-based safety and health. In the VPP, management, labor, and OSHA establish cooperative relationships at workplaces that have implemented a comprehensive safety and health management system.
- Approval into VPP is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health

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VPP

- Statistical evidence for VPP's success is impressive. The average VPP worksite has a Days Away Restricted or Transferred (DART) case rate of 52% below the average for its industry(1).
 - This information is calculated annually by the Office of Partnership and Recognition and is based upon the injury and illness data submitted every year by the VPP participants.
- These sites typically do not start out with such low rates.
 - Reductions in injuries and illnesses begin when the site commits to the VPP approach to safety and health management and the challenging VPP application process.

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STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

- In a Partnership, OSHA enters into an extended, voluntary, cooperative relationship with groups of employers, employees, and employee representatives (sometimes including other stakeholders, and sometimes involving only one employer) in order to encourage, assist, and recognize their efforts to eliminate serious hazards and achieve a high level of worker safety and health.
- Partnering with OSHA is appropriate for the many employers who want to do the right thing but need help in strengthening worker safety and health at their worksites. Within the OSPP, management, labor, and OSHA are proving that old adversaries can become new allies committed to cooperative solutions to the problems of worker safety and health.

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STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

- OSHA and its partners can identify a common goal, develop plans for achieving that goal, and cooperate in implementation.
- While employers in Partnership remain subject to OSHA enforcement, the OSPP provides them an opportunity to work cooperatively with OSHA and workers to identify the most serious workplace hazards, develop workplace-appropriate safety and health management systems, share resources, and find effective ways to reduce worker injuries, illnesses, and deaths.
- Most of the worksites that have chosen to partner with OSHA are small businesses.

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ALLIANCES

- OSHA establishes Alliances through a written agreement with an organization for an initial term of two years, which may be renewed at OSHA's discretion.
- Alliance participants that have successfully completed an initial two-year agreement and one renewal period may become program Ambassadors.

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ALLIANCES

- Alliances with OSHA help:
- Increase worker access to effective workplace safety and health tools and to information about worker rights and employer responsibilities.
- Leverage resources to maximize worker safety and health protections.
- Establish progressive dialogue with the agency and others committed to workplace safety and health

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CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

- Must be a corporation, nonprofit association, and/or federal agency. Private or for-profit safety and health consultant organizations are not eligible to participate.
- Must be an experienced, non-OSHA organization that meets all eligibility requirements including:
 - Demonstrated knowledge and experience in safety and health management programs;
 - Availability of resources including time, personnel, and expertise; and
 - Commitment to workplace safety and health.

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CHALLENGE PROGRAMS

- Designed for safety and health professionals to volunteer time and resources to support and advise participants
- Non-OSHA safety and health professionals apply to be administrators and serve as the mentors and point of contact

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CONSULTATION PROGRAMS

- OSHA provides a free service, On-Site Consultation, for small businesses with fewer than 250 workers at a site (and no more than 500 employees nationwide).
- On-site Consultation services are separate from enforcement and do not result in penalties or citations.
- Each year, OSHA makes more than 29,000 consultation visits to small businesses to provide free compliance assistance.
- By working with the OSHA Consultation Program, certain exemplary employers may request participation in OSHA's Safety and Health Recognition Program, SHARP.

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CONSULTATION PROGRAMS

MASSACHUSETTS

- OSHA Consultation Program
- Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards
- 37 Shattuck Street
Lawrence,
Massachusetts 01843
- Phone: (508) 616-0461
(Option 2)
Fax: (978) 687-0013

MAINE

- Maine Bureau of Labor Standards
- Workplace Safety & Health Division
- 45 State House Station
- Augusta, Maine 04333-0045
- Phone (877) 723-3345 or
(207) 623-7900
- Fax (207) 623-7934

NEW HAMPSHIRE

- WorkWISE NH
- Keene State College
- 229 Main Street, Elliot
Hall M-3925
Keene, New Hampshire
03435
- (603) 358-2411
- (603) 358-2399

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CONSULTATION PROGRAMS

RHODE ISLAND

- OSHA Consultation Program, Office of Healthy Housing and Environment
- Rhode Island Department of Health
- 3 Capitol Hill, Cannon Building, Room 206 Providence, Rhode Island 02908
- Phone (401) 222-7747
- Fax (401) 222-2456

VERMONT

- Project WorkSAFE
- Vermont Department of Labor
- P.O. Box 488, 5 Green Mountain Dr. Montpelier, Vermont 05601-0488
- Phone (888) 723-3937 or (802) 888-0620
- Fax (802) 888-0730

CONNECTICUT

- Connecticut Department of Labor/CONN-OSHA
- 38 Wolcott Hill Road Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109
- Phone (860) 263-6900
- Fax (860) 263-6940

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COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE SPECIALISTS

- Compliance Assistance Specialists in OSHA's Regional and Area Offices around the country provide outreach to a variety of groups free of charge.
- These groups include small businesses and other employers, trade and professional associations, union locals, and community and faith-based groups.
- Compliance Assistance Specialists can provide general information about OSHA's compliance assistance resources and how to comply with OSHA standards.

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COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE SPECIALISTS

- They are available for seminars, workshops, and speaking events.
- They also promote and help implement OSHA's cooperative programs, including the Voluntary Protection Programs, the Strategic Partnership Program, and the Alliance Program.

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EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

- OSHA has a variety of educational materials and electronic tools available on its website. These include utilities such as expert advisors, electronic compliance assistance, videos and other information for employers and workers.
- OSHA's software programs and eTools walk you through safety and health issues and common problems to find the best solutions for your workplace.
- OSHA's extensive publications help explain OSHA standards, job hazards, and mitigation strategies and provide assistance in developing effective safety and health programs.

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ENFORCEMENT

- Set enforcement policy and targeted inspection programs.
- Respond to fatalities, catastrophes and complaints.
- Emphasis Programs at the national, regional and local levels.
 - National Emphasis Programs;
 - Site-Specific Targeting
 - Amputations
 - Heat

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NATIONAL EMPHASIS PROGRAMS (NEP)

- **Updated Site-Specific Targeting (SST)**
 - SST (2023 version) ended on February 7, 2025.
 - Updated SST issued on May 20, 2025.
- **Updated Amputations in Manufacturing Industries NEP**
 - Updated NEP was issued on June 26, 2025.

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SITE-SPECIFIC TARGETING (SST)

- The new directive, that was issued with an effective date of May 20, 2025, replaces the previous SST program directive issued on February 7, 2023.
- This Instruction is for two years (May 20, 2027) from the effective date, unless replaced by a new Instruction.
- The Site-Specific Targeting program is OSHA's primary planned inspection program for non-construction establishments with 20 or more employees.

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SITE-SPECIFIC TARGETING (SST)

- Using OSHA Form 300A data from calendar years 2021-2023, establishments may be selected for inspection based on:
 - High injury and illness rates from 2023 data.
 - Upwardly trending injury and illness rates based on 2021-2023 data at or above twice the 2022 private sector average.
 - Injury and illness rates markedly below industry averages.
 - Failure to submit an OSHA Form 300A in 2023.

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NEP - AMPUTATIONS IN MANUFACTURING

- The updated program issued on June 26, 2025, will be in place for five years.
- Significant changes in the updated emphasis program include:
 - An updated list of North American Industry Code System establishment codes identified for inclusion in the program.
 - Allows establishments that had an inspection under the NEP in the previous 24 months and did not report an amputation to be removed from the programmed inspection list.
 - Establishments with 10 or fewer employees and their primary NAICS code is on the “Low-Hazard Industry Table” of the Appropriations Act Directive will not be inspected under this NEP.

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APPROPRIATIONS DIRECTIVE

Enforcement Exemptions and Limitations under the Annual Appropriations Act

- Originally issued in 1998
- Updated based on information gathered over the past 25 years
- New directive issued July 18, 2024
- New landing page: www.osha.gov/enforcement/appropriations-act
- New Appendix A with FAQs added

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INSPECTIONS

- Focus inspection resources on the most hazardous workplaces.
 - Imminent danger situations
 - Severe injuries and illnesses
 - Complaints
 - Referrals
 - Targeted inspections
 - Follow-up inspections

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INSPECTION PROCESS

- Four phases:
 - Presentation of credentials
 - Opening Conference
 - Walkaround
 - Closing Conference

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PENALTIES

Type of Violation	Penalty Minimum	Penalty Maximum
Serious	\$1,221** per violation	\$16,550 per violation
Other-Than-Serious	\$0 per violation	\$16,550 per violation
Willful or Repeated	\$11,823* per violation	\$165,514 per violation
Posting Requirements	\$0 per violation	\$16,550 per violation
Failure to Abate	N/A	\$16,550 per day unabated beyond the abatement date [generally limited to 30 days maximum]

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PENALTY UPDATES

- Updated procedures focus on prevention and prompt hazard abatement.
- Increased penalty reductions make it easier for small businesses to invest resources in compliance and hazard abatement.
- Employers can benefit if they:
 - Immediately address or correct hazard,
 - Have never been inspected by federal/state OSHA,
 - No history of serious, repeat or failure-to-abate violations, or
 - Were inspected in previous five years but had no serious, willful or failure-to-abate violations.
- Effective July 14, 2025.

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FOM CHAPTER 6 PENALTY UPDATES

- Allowable history percentage adjustment for a *reduction/increase in penalty* has been increased to 20% (Previously 10%).
 - New eligibility criteria for employers never inspected by Federal OSHA nationwide or by any State Plan to receive a penalty reduction.
- Expanded the size of small employers for penalty reductions:
 - Serious and OTS: 70% reduction allowed for employers with 1-25 employees. Previously 1-10 employees.
 - Willful-Serious: 80% reduction allowed for employers with 20 or fewer employees. Previously 10 or fewer.
- New category of Quick-Fix added (Abatement within 5 days) to encourage prompt abatement of hazards

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WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

- OSHA enforces more than 20 whistleblower statutes.
- Statutes protect workers from adverse actions.
- Ways to file a complaint:
 - Online
 - Fax/Email/Mail
 - Telephone
 - In person
 - Complaints are accepted in all languages
 - Visit www.whistleblowers.gov

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TRACKING WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

- Helps understand industry hazards, where to implement protections, and prevent future incidents.
- Establishments that meet size and industry criteria must submit data from OSHA Form 300A, 300, and 301 (or equivalent forms) annually.
- OSHA publishes data collected on its website after taking steps to detect and remove certain personally identifiable information (PII).
- Severe Injury Report – online tool to search the database, view trends, and prevent injuries.

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EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

Federal law entitles every employee the rights to:

- A safe and healthful workplace
- Speak up about safety and health concerns without fear of retaliation
- Be trained in the language they understand
- Required safety equipment, such as gloves or a harness and lifeline for falls, and
- Report an injury or illness, request an OSHA inspection, and speak to the inspector.
- [Visit osha.gov/workers](https://www.osha.gov/workers)

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EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide a workplace that is free of known safety and health hazards.
- Display OSHA poster "Job Safety and Health: It's the Law" in the workplace.
- Many employers with more than 10 employees must keep a record of serious work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Certain low-risk industries are exempt.
- Visit www.osha.gov/employers

The poster features the OSHA logo and the text "Job Safety and Health IT'S THE LAW!". It lists responsibilities for employers and workers, and includes contact information for OSHA.

All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace.
- Raise a safety or health concern with your employer or OSHA, or report a work-related injury or illness, without being retaliated against.
- Receive information and training on job hazards, including all hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Request a confidential OSHA inspection of your workplace if you believe there are unsafe or unhealthy conditions. You have the right to have a representative contact OSHA on your behalf.
- Participate (or have your representative participate) in an OSHA inspection and speak in private to the inspector.
- File a complaint with OSHA within 30 days (by phone, online or by mail) if you have been retaliated against for using your rights.
- See any OSHA citations issued to your employer.
- Request copies of your medical records, tests that measure hazards in the workplace, and the workplace injury and illness log.

This poster is available free from OSHA.

Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards. It is illegal to retaliate against an employee for using any of their rights under the law, including raising a health and safety concern with you or with OSHA, or reporting a work-related injury or illness.
- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Notify OSHA within 8 hours of a workplace fatality or within 24 hours of any work-related incident resulting in hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye.
- Provide required training to all workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand.
- Prominently display this poster in the workplace.
- Post OSHA citations at or near the place of the alleged violations.

On-Site Consultation services are available to small and medium-sized employers, without citation or penalty, through OSHA-supported consultation programs in every state.

Contact OSHA. We can help.

1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 1-877-889-5627 • www.osha.gov

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TRAINING

- Often referred to as 10-and 30-hour training.
- Program is not a certification or license, does not meet requirements of OSHA standards.
- Provides assistance and tools to develop effective safety and health programs.
- OSHA Training Institute (OTI) Education Centers are a national network of non-profit organizations authorized by OSHA to offer OSHA courses.
- OTI Education Centers offer more than 50 courses in construction, maritime, and general industries.
- Visit www.osha.gov/otiec.

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LETTERS OF INTERPRETATION

- Helping employers and workers.
- Raising awareness and use of the agency's Letters of Interpretation.
- Help employers understand how to comply with federal requirements.
- Search by keyword, standard number or date on updated [Letters of Interpretation webpage](#) .

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CONCLUSION

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