

OSHA INSPECTIONS – A PRIMER FOR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS

This newsletter was designed to help you explain the OSHA inspection process to your students, and make them aware of information available on the state and federal OSHA websites.



Minnesota is one of the 21 states that administers its own OSHA plan, which covers private, state, and local government employees. An OSHA inspector can visit a workplace at any time based on the following inspection priorities: 1) imminent danger; 2) fatal accidents and catastrophes; 3) employee complaints; 4) programmed inspections, and 5) follow-up inspections. Inspection results are communicated in writing to the employer. The inspection summary is available on-line at: <https://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/establishment.html>

What happens during an OSHA inspection?

- 1. Opening Conference.** This will include a presentation of inspector's credentials and disclosure of the reason and scope of coverage of the inspection.
- 2. Records Review.** OSHA logs, written programs, SDS, and training & safety meeting records should be readily available and up-to-date.
- 3. Inspection.** The inspector will walk through your shop observing work conditions and employees. The inspector will take notes, point out hazards and take photos. The inspector may measure the noise levels in the shop. If there are additional concerns, the inspector may decide to return and perform more monitoring.
- 4. Interviews.** The OSHA inspector will talk to employees in private. The employer may not be present during these interviews.
- 5. Closing Conference.** During this meeting the inspector will discuss the findings of the inspection.
- 6. Citations and Penalties.** If any violations are found, a citation will be sent by registered mail and will include penalties, abatement dates and instructions. The citation must be posted near where the violations occurred.

How can business owners make an OSHA inspection go smoothly?

- Be prepared.** Make sure all your paperwork (safety training records, written programs, SDS, records of injuries, etc.) is in order and easily accessible. More than one person should know where everything is.
- Be cooperative.** Listen to what the OSHA inspector says; clarify information as needed. Treat the inspector's observations seriously.
- Be proactive.** Take notes during the inspection. Correct problems immediately, if you can, in the presence of the inspector.

How can employees make an OSHA inspection go smoothly?

- Be cooperative.** Answer all OSHA inspector's questions and demonstrate work operations as needed. Participate in interviews when asked. These interviews are confidential.



What will an OSHA inspector look at during an inspection?

The inspector will look at the following items. *NOTE: this list is not all-inclusive.*

Written Programs:

- Right-to-Know
- Respiratory Protection
- LOTO

Records, Posters, and signs:

- Safety training records and safety meeting documents
- Respirator medical evaluation and fit test results
- Personal protective equipment assessment
- Safety data sheets (SDS)
- OSHA posters
- OSHA 300 Log (shops with 11 or more employees)
- Signs (examples: Exit, No Smoking, etc)

Items/Conditions:

- Fire extinguishers, exits, and electrical panels
- Ventilation and explosion-proof wiring in the paint booth and mixing room
- Storage of flammable materials
- Condition and use of electrical cords
- Provision and use of appropriate gloves, hearing protection, safety glasses and respirators
- Machine guarding
- LOTO disconnects
- Proper control of compressed air used for cleaning
- Presence and condition of first aid kit, compressed gas cylinders, welding equipment, etc

How can OSHA help improve safety in a shop?

[MN OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation](#) office provides free, confidential advice on how to evaluate and correct workplace hazards, as well as templates for safety programs that your facility must have in place. [MN OSHA Compliance](#) provides free handouts, presentations and videos about specific workplace safety issues.

There is no communication between the Consultation and Enforcement branches of an OSHA office.

[Federal OSHA](#) also provides free information on worker rights, workplace hazards, safety programs, and educational materials (such as videos, factsheets, reports specific to various industries, etc). Look up the information you need using the search box or the A-Z Index located on the top right of the page.

How can I report a safety concern to OSHA?

Every employee has the right to file a complaint with OSHA. Employees are protected from discrimination by the employer for exercising their safety and health rights. If a worker has been retaliated against for using their rights, they must file a complaint with OSHA as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days.

In Minnesota, go on line to: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/OSHA/FileComplaint.asp> OR call (651) 284-5050 or 1-877-470-6742 OR email osha.compliance@state.mn.us.

MN OSHA will maintain confidentiality of the complainant's identity and will inform the complainant of any action it takes regarding the complaint.

Resources

MN OSHA: <http://www.dli.mn.gov/MnOsha.asp>

Federal OSHA: <https://www.osha.gov/>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH): <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/>

Questions, suggestions or concerns?

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