

# **Employer Rights and Responsibilities**

## **Following an OSHA Inspection**



Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure the safety and health of America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health.

This handbook provides a general overview of a particular topic related to OSHA standards. It does not alter or determine compliance responsibilities in OSHA standards or the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970*. Because interpretations and enforcement policy may change over time, you should consult current OSHA administrative interpretations and decisions by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission and the Courts for additional guidance on OSHA compliance requirements.

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# **Employer Rights and Responsibilities**

## **Following an OSHA Inspection**

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U.S. Department of Labor

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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## After an OSHA Inspection

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This pamphlet contains important information regarding your rights and responsibilities under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* (*OSH Act*, Public Law 91-596, as amended through January 1, 2004).

An OSHA compliance safety and health officer (CSHO) conducts an inspection of your workplace, in accordance with the *OSH Act*. After the inspection, the CSHO reports the findings to the Area Director who evaluates them. If a violation exists, OSHA will issue you a **Citation and Notification of Penalty** detailing the exact nature of the violation(s) and any associated penalties (see also OSHA Fact Sheet *OSHA Inspections*). A citation informs you of the alleged violation, sets a proposed time period within which to correct the violation, and proposes the appropriate dollar penalties.

The information in this booklet can and should be used as a discussion guide during your closing conference with the OSHA compliance officer. For each apparent violation found during the inspection, the compliance officer has discussed or will discuss the following with you:

- Nature of the violation;
- Possible abatement measures you may take to correct the violative condition;
- Possible abatement dates you may be required to meet; and
- Any penalties that the Area Director may issue.

The CSHO is a highly trained professional who can help you recognize and evaluate hazards as well as suggest appropriate methods of correcting violations. To minimize employee exposure to possible hazardous conditions, abatement efforts should always begin as soon as possible.

**Important Note:** Currently, 24 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands operate OSHA-approved state plans: 22 of these plans cover the private and public sectors and 4 cover only public

sector (state and local government) employment. For more information, employers and employees in these 26 states and territories should check with their state agencies. State plans may include standards, regulations, and procedures that, while at least as effective as their Federal equivalents, are not always identical to them. For example:

- Some states have different options and procedures for the employer who believes changes, modifications, or deletions of the penalty, citation, or abatement dates are needed;
- Although Federal OSHA recommends that employers in general industry, shipbuilding and repair, and marine terminal and long-shoring operations establish comprehensive workplace safety and health programs, some states require such programs; and
- In states with OSHA-approved safety and health plans, an employee who believes that he/she has been discriminated against pursuant to Section 11(c) of the *OSH Act* is entitled to file a complaint alleging discrimination under both state and Federal procedures.

The following general information defines the types of violations and explains the actions you may take if you receive a citation as the result of an inspection.

## Types of Violations

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**Willful:** A willful violation is defined as a violation in which the employer knew that a hazardous condition existed but made no reasonable effort to eliminate it and in which the hazardous condition violated a standard, regulation, or the *OSH Act*. Penalties range from \$5,000 to \$70,000 per willful violation.

**Serious:** A serious violation exists when the workplace hazard could cause injury or illness

that would most likely result in death or serious physical harm, unless the employer did not know or could not have known of the violation. OSHA may propose a penalty of up to \$7,000 for each violation.

**Other-Than-Serious:** An other-than-serious violation is defined as a situation in which the most serious injury or illness that would be likely to result from a hazardous condition cannot reasonably be predicted to cause death or serious physical harm to exposed employees, but does have a direct and immediate relationship to their safety and health. OSHA may impose a penalty of up to \$7,000 for each violation.

**De Minimis:** *De minimis* violations are violations that have no direct or immediate relationship to safety or health and do not result in citations or penalties.

**Failure to Abate:** A failure to abate violation exists when the employer has not corrected a violation for which OSHA has issued a citation and the abatement date has passed or is covered under a settlement agreement. A failure to abate also exists when the employer has not complied with interim measures involved in a long-term abatement within the time given. OSHA may impose a penalty of up to \$7,000 per day for each violation.

**Repeated:** An employer may be cited for a repeated violation if that employer has been cited previously for a substantially similar condition and the citation has become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. A citation is currently viewed as a repeated violation if it occurs within 3 years either from the date that the earlier citation becomes a final order or from the final abatement date, whichever is later. Repeated violations can bring a civil penalty of up to \$70,000 for each violation.

For purposes of determining whether a violation is repeated, the following criteria generally apply:

1. **Fixed Establishments:** Citations issued to employers having fixed establishments (such as factories, terminals, and stores) are not normally limited to the cited establishment. A multifacility employer, for example, can be cited for a repeated violation if the violation recurred at any plant nationwide, and if a citation is obtained and reveals a repeated violation.
2. **Nonfixed Establishments:** For employers engaged in businesses having no fixed establishments (such as construction sites and oil and gas drilling sites), repeated violations are alleged based on prior violations occurring anywhere, and at any of the employer's identified establishments nationwide, based on employer history.
3. **Longshoring Establishments:** A longshoring establishment covers all longshoring activities of a single stevedore within any single port area. Longshoring employers are subject to repeated violation citations based on prior violations occurring anywhere in the nation.
4. **Other Maritime Establishments:** Other maritime establishments covered by OSHA standards (such as shipbuilding and ship repairing) are generally defined as fixed establishments. (See 1, above.)

A VIOLATION CAN BE CITED AS REPEATED IF THE EMPLOYER HAS BEEN CITED FOR THE SAME OR A SUBSTANTIALLY SIMILAR VIOLATION ANYWHERE IN THE NATION WITHIN THE PAST 3 YEARS.

## Posting Requirements

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When you receive a Citation and Notification of Penalty, you must post the citation (or a copy of it) at or near the place where each violation occurred to make employees aware of the hazards to which they may be exposed. The citation must remain posted for 3 working days or until the violation is corrected, whichever is longer. (Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays are not counted as working days.) **You must comply with these posting requirements even if you contest the citation.**

The abatement certification documents—such as abatement certifications, abatement plans and progress reports—also must be posted at or near the place where the violation occurred. For moveable equipment found to be in violation and where the posting of violations would be difficult or impractical, the employer has the option to identify the equipment with a “Warning” tag specified in the abatement verification regulation, Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1903.19(i).

## Employer Options

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As an employer who has been cited, you may take either of the following courses of action:

- If you agree to the Citation and Notification of Penalty, you must correct the condition by the date set in the citation and pay the penalty, if one is proposed;
- If you do not agree, you have 15 working days from the date you receive the citation to contest in writing any or all of the following:
  - Citation,
  - Proposed penalty, and/or
  - Abatement date.

Before deciding on either of these options, you may request an informal conference with the

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OSHA Area Director to discuss any issues related to the citation and notification of penalty. (See **Informal Conference and Settlement**, below.)

OSHA will inform the affected employee representatives of the informal conference or contest.

## How to Comply

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For violations you do not contest, you must:

(1) promptly notify the OSHA Area Director by letter, signed by a member of management, that you have taken the appropriate corrective action within the time set forth in the citation, and (2) pay any penalties itemized.

The notification you send the Area Director is referred to as **Abatement Certification**. For Other-Than-Serious violations, this may be a signed letter identifying the inspection number and the citation item number and noting that you corrected the violation by the date specified on the citation. For more serious violations (such as Serious, Willful, Repeat, or Failure-to-Abate), abatement certification requires more detailed proof.

If the employer has abatement questions after the inspection, the Area Director must ensure that additional information, if available, is provided to the employer as soon as possible.

Employers also can find guidance on abatement verification on OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov/Publications/Abate/abate.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/Abate/abate.html).

When the citation permits an extended time for abatement, you must ensure that employees are adequately protected during this time. For example, the citation may require the immediate use of personal protective equipment by employees while engineering controls are being installed. When such is the case and where indicated on the citation, you must also provide OSHA with an abatement plan (steps you will take to protect employees and correct the hazards) and periodic progress reports on your actions.

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The penalties itemized on the citation and notification of penalty are payable within 15 working days of receipt of the penalty notice. If, however, you contest the citation or penalty in good faith, OSHA will suspend abatement and payment of penalties for those items contested until the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, or a higher court, issues a final order or rule. The Review Commission is an independent agency and is **not** a part of the U.S. Department of Labor. The final order of the Commission will either uphold, modify, or eliminate the citations and/or penalties. Penalties for items not contested, however, are still due within 15 working days. (For further details, see the section on **How to Contest Citations** at page 11.)

Payment should be made by check or money order payable to DOL-OSHA. Please indicate on your payment the OSHA number from the upper right-hand corner of your citation and **send it to the OSHA Area Office listed on the Citation and Notification of Penalty.**

## **Informal Conference and Settlement**

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Before deciding whether to file a **Notice of Intent to Contest**, you may request an informal conference with the OSHA Area Director to discuss the citation and notification of penalty.

You may use this opportunity to do any of the following:

- Obtain a better explanation of the violations cited;
- Obtain a more complete understanding of the specific standards that apply;
- Negotiate and enter into an informal settlement agreement;
- Discuss ways to correct violations;
- Discuss problems concerning the abatement dates;

- Discuss problems concerning employee safety practices;
- Resolve disputed citations and penalties, (thereby eliminating the need for the more formal procedures associated with litigation before the Review Commission); and
- Obtain answers to any other questions you may have.

OSHA encourages you to take advantage of the opportunity to have an informal conference if you foresee any difficulties in complying with any part of the citation. **Please note, however, that an informal conference must be held within the 15-working-day Notice of Intent to Contest period and will neither extend the 15-working-day contest period nor take the place of the filing of a written notice if you desire to contest.** Employee representative(s) have the right to participate in any informal conference or negotiations between the Regional Administrator or Area Director and the employer.

If you agree that the cited violations exist, but you have a valid reason for wishing to extend the abatement date(s), you may discuss this with the Area Director in an informal conference. He or she may issue an amended citation that changes the abatement date prior to the expiration of the 15-working-day period without your filing a Notice of Intent to Contest.

If you do not contest it within 15 working days, your citation will become a final order not subject to review by any court or agency. After this occurs, the OSHA Area Director may continue to provide you with information and assistance on how to abate the hazards cited in your citation, but may not amend or change any citation or penalty which has become a final order. The Area Director may only advise you on abatement methods or extend the time you need to abate the violation. (See **Petition for Modification of Abatement** at page 13.)

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Whenever the employer, an affected employee, or employee representative requests an informal conference, the parties shall be afforded the opportunity to participate fully. If either party chooses not to participate in the informal conference, that party forfeits the right to be consulted before decisions are made that affect the citations. If the requesting party objects to the attendance of the other party, OSHA may hold separate informal conferences. During a joint informal conference, separate or private discussions will be permitted if either party requests them. Informal conferences may be held using any means practical.

## **How to Contest Citations**

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If you wish to contest any portion of your citation, you must submit a Notice of Intent to Contest in writing within 15 working days after receipt of the citation and notification of penalty. This applies even if you have stated your disagreement with a citation, penalty, or abatement date during a telephone conversation or an informal conference.

The Notice of Intent to Contest must clearly state what is being contested—the citation, the penalty, the abatement date, or any combination of these factors. In addition, the notice must state whether all the violations on the citation, or just specific violations, are being contested. (For example, “I wish to contest the citation and penalty proposed for items 3 and 4 of the citation issued June 27, 1990.”)

Your contest must be made in good faith. OSHA will not consider a contest filed solely to avoid your responsibilities for abatement or payment of penalties to be a good faith contest.

A proper contest of any item suspends your legal obligation to abate and pay until the item contested has been resolved. If you contest only the penalty, you must still correct all violations by

the dates indicated on the citation. If you contest only some items on the citation, you must correct the other items by the abatement date and pay the corresponding penalties within 15 days of notification.

After you file a Notice of Intent to Contest, your case is officially in litigation. If you wish to settle the case, you may contact the OSHA Area Director who will give you the name of the attorney handling your case for OSHA. All settlements of contested cases are negotiated between you and the attorney according to the rules of procedure of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

## **The Contest Process**

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If you file the written Notice of Intent to Contest within the required 15 working days, the OSHA Area Director forwards your case to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. The Commission assigns the case to an administrative law judge who usually will schedule a hearing in a public place close to your workplace. Both employers and employees have the right to participate in this hearing, which contains all the elements of a trial, including examination and cross-examination of witnesses. You may choose to represent yourself or have an attorney represent you. The administrative law judge may affirm, modify, or eliminate any contested items of the citation or penalty.

As with any other legal procedure, there is an appeals process. Once the administrative law judge has ruled, any party to the case may request a further review by the full Review Commission. In addition, any of the three commissioners may, on his or her own motion, bring the case before the entire Commission for review. The Commission's ruling, in turn, may be appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal

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circuit in which the case arose or for the circuit where the employer has his or her principal office.

## **Petition for Modification of Abatement**

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OSHA assigns abatement dates on the basis of the best information available when issuing the citation. If you are unable to meet an abatement date because of uncontrollable events or other circumstances, and the 15-working-day contest period has expired, you may file a **Petition for Modification of Abatement (PMA)** with the OSHA Area Director.

The petition must be in writing and must be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than 1 working day after the abatement date. To show clearly that you have made a good faith effort to comply, the PMA must include all of the following information before OSHA considers it:

- Steps you have taken to achieve compliance, and dates they were taken;
- Additional time you need to comply;
- Why you need additional time;
- Interim steps you are taking to safeguard your employees against the cited hazard(s) until the abatement;
- A certification that the petition has been posted, the date of posting and, when appropriate, a statement that the petition has been furnished to an authorized representative of the affected employees. The petition must remain posted for 10 working days, during which employees may file an objection.

The OSHA Area Director may grant or oppose a PMA. If it is opposed, it automatically becomes a contested case before the Review Commission. If a PMA is granted, OSHA may conduct a monitoring inspection to ensure that conditions are as they have been described and that adequate

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progress has been made toward abatement. The OSHA Area Office may provide additional information on PMAs.

## What Employees Can Do

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Employees or their authorized representatives may contest any or all of the abatement dates set for violations if they believe them to be unreasonable. A written Notice of Intent to Contest must be filed with the OSHA Area Director within 15 working days after the employer receives the citation.

**The filing of an employee contest does not suspend the employer's obligation to abate.**

Employees also have the right to object to a PMA. Such objections must be in writing and must be sent to the Area Office within 10 days of service or posting. OSHA will not make a decision regarding the PMA until the Review Commission resolves the issue.

## Follow-up Inspections and Failure to Abate

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If you receive a citation, a follow-up inspection may be conducted to verify that you have done the following:

- Posted the citation as required;
- Corrected the violations as required in the citation; and/or
- Protected employees adequately and made appropriate progress in correcting hazards during multi-step or lengthy abatement periods.

In addition to providing for penalties for Failure-to-Post citations and Failure-to-Abate violations, the *OSH Act* clearly states that employers have a **continuing responsibility** to comply with the OSH Act and assure your employees safe and healthful working conditions. OSHA will cite any new violations discovered during a follow-up inspection.

## **Employer Discrimination**

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To achieve abatement by the date set forth in the citation, employers must initiate abatement efforts promptly.

The *OSH Act* prohibits employers from discharging or otherwise discriminating against an employee who has exercised any right under this law, including the right to make safety and health complaints or to request an OSHA inspection. OSHA will investigate complaints from employees who believe that they have been discriminated against. If the investigation discloses probable violations of employee rights, court action may follow.

Employees who believe that they have been discriminated against must file their complaints within **30 days** of the alleged act of discrimination. For more information, contact OSHA and inquire about Section 11(c) procedures.

## **Providing False Information**

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All information that employers and employees report to OSHA must be accurate and truthful. Providing false information on efforts to abate cited conditions or in required records is punishable under the *OSH Act*.

## **OSHA Assistance**

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OSHA can provide extensive help through a variety of programs, including technical assistance about effective safety and health programs, state plans, workplace consultations, voluntary protection programs, strategic partnerships, training and education, and more. An overall commitment to workplace safety and health can add value to your business, to your workplace and to your life.

### **Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines**

Effective management of worker safety and health protection is a decisive factor in reducing the extent and severity of work-related injuries

and illnesses and their related costs. In fact, an effective safety and health program forms the basis of good worker protection and can save time and money (about \$4 for every dollar spent) and increase productivity and reduce worker injuries, illnesses and related workers' compensation costs.

To assist employers and employees in developing effective safety and health programs, OSHA published recommended *Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines* (54 *Federal Register* (16): 3904-3916, January 26, 1989). These voluntary guidelines apply to all places of employment covered by OSHA.

The guidelines identify four general elements critical to the development of a successful safety and health management program:

- Management leadership and employee involvement.
- Work analysis.
- Hazard prevention and control.
- Safety and health training.

The guidelines recommend specific actions, under each of these general elements, to achieve an effective safety and health program. The *Federal Register* notice is available online at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## State Programs

*The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act)* encourages states to develop and operate their own job safety and health plans. OSHA approves and monitors these plans. Twenty-four states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands currently operate approved state plans: 22 of these plans cover both private and public (state and local government) employment; Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and the Virgin Islands cover the public sector only. States and territories with their own OSHA-approved occupational safety and health plans must adopt standards identical to, or at least as effective as, the Federal standards.

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## Consultation Services

Consultation assistance is available on request to employers who want help in establishing and maintaining a safe and healthful workplace. Largely funded by OSHA, the service is provided at no cost to the employer. Primarily developed for smaller employers with more hazardous operations, the consultation service is delivered by state governments employing professional safety and health consultants. Comprehensive assistance includes an appraisal of all mechanical systems, work practices and occupational safety and health hazards of the workplace and all aspects of the employer's present job safety and health program. In addition, the service offers assistance to employers in developing and implementing an effective safety and health program. No penalties are proposed or citations issued for hazards identified by the consultant. OSHA provides consultation assistance to the employer with the assurance that his or her name and firm and any information about the workplace will not be routinely reported to OSHA enforcement staff.

Under the consultation program, certain exemplary employers may request participation in OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). Eligibility for participation in SHARP includes receiving a comprehensive consultation visit, demonstrating exemplary achievements in workplace safety and health by abating all identified hazards and developing an excellent safety and health program.

Employers accepted into SHARP may receive an exemption from programmed inspections (not complaint or accident investigation inspections) for a period of one year. For more information concerning consultation assistance, see the OSHA website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP)

Voluntary Protection Programs and on-site consultation services, when coupled with an effective enforcement program, expand worker protec-

tion to help meet the goals of the *OSH Act*. The three levels of VPP are Star, Merit, and Star Demonstration designed to recognize outstanding achievements by companies that have successfully incorporated comprehensive safety and health programs into their total management system. The VPPs motivate others to achieve excellent safety and health results in the same outstanding way as they establish a cooperative relationship between employers, employees and OSHA.

For additional information on VPP and how to apply, contact the OSHA regional offices listed at the end of this publication.

## **Strategic Partnership Program**

OSHA's Strategic Partnership Program, the newest member of OSHA's cooperative programs, helps encourage, assist and recognize the efforts of partners to eliminate serious workplace hazards and achieve a high level of worker safety and health. Whereas OSHA's Consultation Program and VPP entail one-on-one relationships between OSHA and individual worksites, most strategic partnerships seek to have a broader impact by building cooperative relationships with groups of employers and employees. These partnerships are voluntary, cooperative relationships between OSHA, employers, employee representatives and others (e.g., trade unions, trade and professional associations, universities and other government agencies).

For more information on this and other cooperative programs, contact your nearest OSHA office, or visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

## **Alliance Program**

Through the Alliance Program, OSHA works with groups committed to safety and health, including businesses, trade or professional organizations, unions and educational institutions, to leverage resources and expertise to

develop compliance assistance tools and resources and share information with employers and employees to help prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities in the workplace.

Alliance program agreements have been established with a wide variety of industries including meat, apparel, poultry, steel, plastics, maritime, printing, chemical, construction, paper and telecommunications. These agreements are addressing many safety and health hazards and at-risk audiences, including silica, fall protection, amputations, immigrant workers, youth and small businesses. By meeting the goals of the Alliance Program agreements (training and education, outreach and communication, and promoting the national dialogue on workplace safety and health), OSHA and the Alliance Program participants are developing and disseminating compliance assistance information and resources for employers and employees such as electronic assistance tools, fact sheets, toolbox talks, and training programs.

## **OSHA Training and Education**

OSHA area offices offer a variety of information services, such as compliance assistance, technical advice, publications, audiovisual aids and speakers for special engagements. OSHA's Training Institute in Arlington Heights, IL, provides basic and advanced courses in safety and health for Federal and state compliance officers, state consultants, Federal agency personnel, and private sector employers, employees and their representatives.

The OSHA Training Institute also has established OSHA Training Institute Education Centers to address the increased demand for its courses from the private sector and from other federal agencies. These centers include colleges, universities and nonprofit training organizations that have been selected after a competition for participation in the program.

OSHA also provides funds to nonprofit organizations, through grants, to conduct workplace training and education in subjects where OSHA believes there is a lack of workplace training. Grants are awarded annually. Grant recipients are expected to contribute 20 percent of the total grant cost.

For more information on grants, training and education, contact the OSHA Training Institute, Office of Training and Education, 2020 South Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, (847) 297-4810 or see “Training” on OSHA’s website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). For further information on any OSHA program, contact your nearest OSHA area or regional office listed at the end of this publication.

## **Information Available Electronically**

OSHA has a variety of materials and tools available on its website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). These include electronic compliance assistance tools, such as Safety and Health Topics, eTools, Expert Advisors; regulations, directives and publications; videos and other information for employers and employees. OSHA’s software programs and compliance assistance tools walk you through challenging safety and health issues and common problems to find the best solutions for your workplace.

A wide variety of OSHA materials, including standards, interpretations, directives, and more, can be purchased on CD-ROM from the U.S. Government Printing Office, Superintendent of Documents, phone toll-free (866) 512-1800.

## **OSHA Publications**

OSHA has an extensive publications program. For a listing of free or sales items, visit OSHA’s website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or contact the OSHA Publications Office, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, N-3101, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone: (202) 693-1888 or fax to (202) 693-2498.

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## Contacting OSHA

To report an emergency, file a complaint or seek OSHA advice, assistance or products, call (800) 321-OSHA (6742) or contact your nearest OSHA regional or area office listed below. The teletypewriter (TTY) number is (877) 889-5627.

Written correspondence can be mailed to the nearest OSHA regional or area office listed below or to OSHA's national office at: U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20210.

By visiting OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov), you can also:

- file a complaint online;
- submit general inquiries about workplace safety and health electronically; and
- find more information about OSHA and occupational safety and health.

## OSHA Regional Offices

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### Region I

(CT,\* ME, MA, NH, RI, VT\*)  
JFK Federal Building, Room E340  
Boston, MA 02203  
(617) 565-9860

### Region II

(NJ,\* NY,\* PR,\* VI\*)  
201 Varick Street, Room 670  
New York, NY 10014  
(212) 337-2378

### Region III

(DE, DC, MD,\* PA, VA,\* WV)  
The Curtis Center  
170 S. Independence Mall West  
Suite 740 West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3309  
(215) 861-4900

### Region IV

(AL, FL, GA, KY,\* MS, NC,\* SC,\* TN\*)  
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Room 6T50  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 562-2300

### **Region V**

(IL, IN,\* MI,\* MN,\* OH, WI)  
230 South Dearborn Street  
Room 3244  
Chicago, IL 60604  
(312) 353-2220

### **Region VI**

(AR, LA, NM,\* OK, TX)  
525 Griffin Street, Room 602  
Dallas, TX 75202  
(972) 850-4145

### **Region VII**

(IA,\* KS, MO, NE)  
Two Pershing Square  
2300 Main Street, Suite 1010  
Kansas City, MO 64108  
(816) 283-8745

### **Region VIII**

(CO, MT, ND, SD, UT,\* WY\*)  
1999 Broadway, Suite 1690  
PO Box 46550  
Denver, CO 80202-5716  
(720) 264-6550

### **Region IX**

(AZ,\* CA,\* HI,\* NV,\* and American Samoa,  
Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands)  
90 7th Street, Suite 18-100  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 625-2547

### **Region X**

(AK,\* ID, OR,\* WA\*)  
1111 Third Avenue, Suite 715  
Seattle, WA 98101-3212  
(206) 553-5930

\*These states and territories operate their own OSHA-approved job safety and health programs and cover state and local government employees as well as private sector employees. The Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Virgin Islands plans cover public employees only. States with approved programs must have standards that are identical to, or at least as effective as, the Federal standards.

Note: To get contact information for OSHA area offices, OSHA-approved State Plans, and OSHA Consultation Projects, please visit us online at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or call us at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

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## **Appendix: The Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA)**

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In 1996, Congress passed the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, or SBREFA, in response to concerns expressed by the small business community that Federal regulations were too numerous, too complex and too expensive to implement. SBREFA was designed to give small businesses assistance in understanding and complying with regulations and more of a voice in the development of new regulations. Under SBREFA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other Federal agencies must:

- Produce Small Entity Compliance Guides for some rules;
- Be responsive to small business inquiries about compliance with the agency's regulations;
- Submit final rules to Congress for review;
- Have a penalty reduction policy for small businesses; and
- Involve small businesses in the development of some proposed rules through Small Business Advocacy Review Panels.

### **Commenting on Enforcement Actions**

Under a law passed by Congress in 1996, the Small Business Administration (SBA) has established an SBA Ombudsman and SBA Regional Fairness Boards to investigate small business complaints about Federal agency enforcement actions.

If you are a small business and believe that you have been treated unfairly by OSHA, you may file an electronic comment/complaint with the

SBA Ombudsman over the Internet at:  
[http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/comments/  
commentform1.html](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/comments/commentform1.html)

Or you may contact the SBA's Office of the  
National Ombudsman by:

- Toll-free Phone: (888) REG-FAIR (734-3247)
- Fax: (202) 481-5719
- E-mail: [ombudsman@sba.gov](mailto:ombudsman@sba.gov)
- Mail: Office of the National Ombudsman  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd Street, S.W., MC2120  
Washington, DC 20416-0005

To view the SBREFA Act in its entirety, please  
visit the following web link:

<http://www.sba.gov/advo/laws/sbrefa.html>

For more information on SBREFA, the follow-  
ing web links may prove helpful:

<http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/>

[http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/dsp\\_overview.html](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/dsp_overview.html)

[http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/dsp\\_faq.html](http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman/dsp_faq.html)

<http://www.sba.gov/advo/>

[http://www.sba.gov/advo/laws/is\\_oshapanel.html](http://www.sba.gov/advo/laws/is_oshapanel.html)

NOTE: Filing a complaint with the SBA Ombuds-  
man does not affect any obligation that you may  
have to comply with an OSHA citation or other  
enforcement action. Nor does it mean that you  
need not take other available legal steps to pro-  
tect your interests.



**Occupational Safety  
and Health Administration**

U.S. Department of Labor

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