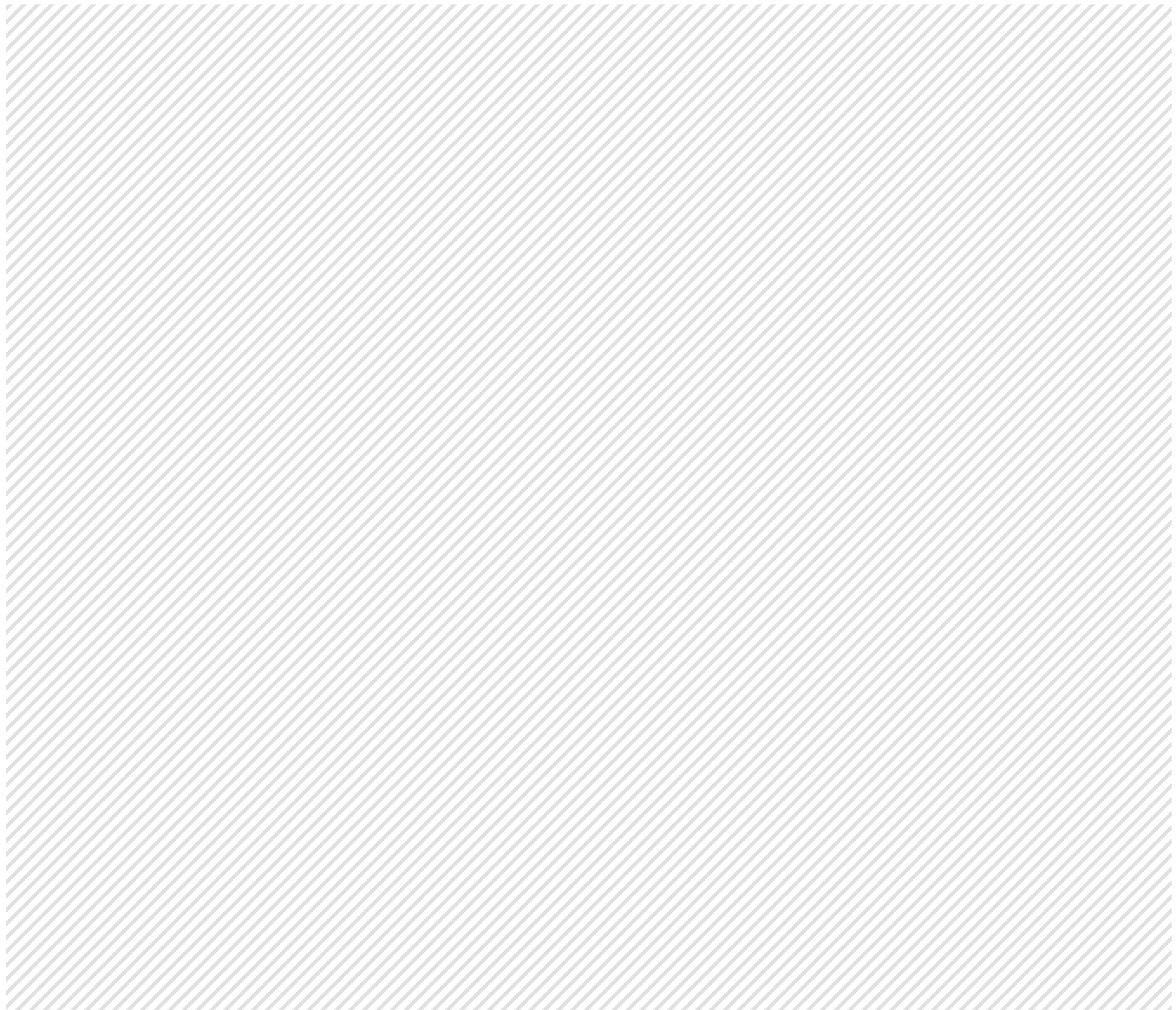


# OSHA Healthcare Safety

## Core Competency Inservice

January 2020



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# Introduction

Congress enacted the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, creating the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA's mission is to help employers and employees reduce on the job injuries, illnesses, and deaths.

OSHA directs national compliance initiatives in occupational safety and health. Through the methods described below, OSHA helps businesses protect their workers and reduce the number of workplace deaths, injuries, and illnesses. When employees stay safe and healthy, companies can reduce workers' compensation insurance costs and medical expenses, decrease payouts for return-to-work programs, reduce faulty products, and lower the costs of job accommodations for injured workers. Indirectly, additional benefits such as increased productivity, lower training costs due to fewer replacement workers, and decreased costs for overtime have also been attributed to OSHA's research and guidance.

## What does OSHA do?

**OSHA employs the following strategies in order to fulfill its mission:**

- Enforcement – making sure OSHA regulations are followed
- Assistance – outreach and training to employers and employees
- Cooperation – partnerships and alliances through voluntary programs

**OSHA promotes workplace safety and health by:**

- Implementing new (or improved) safety and health management systems
- Completing worksite inspections
- Companies failing to follow OSHA regulations may be cited and/or fined
- Promoting cooperative programs including Voluntary Protection Programs, OSHA Strategic Partnerships, and other industry alliances
- Establishing the specific rights and responsibilities of employees and employers
- Supporting innovation in dealing with workplace hazards
- Establishing recordkeeping and reporting requirements for employers
- Developing training programs for occupational safety and health personnel
- Partnering with states that operate their own occupational safety and health programs

## Who is Required to Comply with OSHA?

The Occupational Safety and Health Act covers all employers and employees, either directly through Federal OSHA or through an OSHA-approved state program.

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Twenty-two states have decided to develop their own safety and health programs. The state plans must be as effective as Federal OSHA requirements or better. State plans covering the private sector also must cover state and local government employees. Federal OSHA does not cover state government employees.

## OSHA Regulations

In general, OSHA regulations (also referred to as “standards”) require employers:

- To maintain conditions and/or adopt practices necessary and appropriate to protect workers on the job
- Be familiar with and comply with standards applicable to their establishments
- Ensure that employees have and use personal protective equipment when required for safety and health

In addition, the OSH Act instituted a “general duty clause” (Section 5(a)(1)) which requires each employer to provide a safe place to work without obvious work hazards that cause or could cause death or serious injury to any employee.

**OSHA standards can be grouped into six areas:**

- Administrative Safety
- Exposure Control
- Personal Protection
- Facility Safety
- Tools and Equipment
- Behaviors and Attitudes

### Administrative Safety

The OSHA regulations regarding administrative safety help employers create safety and health programs at their workplaces. These standards require:

#### **Safety Program Development**

How do you set up a safety program and make sure your team participates in it?

#### **Accident Investigations**

How do you deal with an accident after it has occurred? How do you prevent similar accidents from occurring again?

#### **Emergency Planning**

How do you plan for the unexpected? How do you teach your employees how to handle any emergency situation that may arise?

#### **OSHA Recordkeeping**

What are OSHA’s recordkeeping requirements, and what must be done to comply?

#### **Safety Audits**

How do you regularly review your workplace, equipment, tools, and materials to ensure all hazards have been addressed?

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## State and Federal Posting Requirements

What are the federal, state, and industry-specific posting requirements that must be met at each work area?

## Exposure Control

The exposure control standards prevent exposure to hazardous chemicals. They regulate areas such as:

### Asbestos Safety

How do you protect your employees from asbestos exposure?

### Blood Borne Pathogens

How do you protect your employees from blood-related exposure, including needle stick injuries?

### Hazardous Materials

How do you teach your employees how to read and understand hazardous material labeling? How do you put preventive measures in place, so employees know how to deal with hazardous spills such as chemotherapy?

### Hot and Cold Working Conditions

How do you prevent your employees from having to work in hot or cold work environments?

### Lead Safety

How do you mitigate employee exposure to lead?

### Right to Know/Hazard Communications

Are your employees and site visitors aware of the hazardous materials in your workplace? Do they understand how to protect themselves from these hazards?

### Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

Can your employees read and understand the MSDS forms for the materials they use?

### Tuberculosis

Are your employees protected from tuberculosis?

## Personal Protection

Regulations in this area deal with equipment that protects employee's bodies, including:

### Back Safety

How do you protect your employees from normal day-to-day activities that may result in back injury?

### Eye Safety

Do you have sufficient protection in place to care for the eye safety of your employees?

### Fall Protection

Do you and your employees understand and correctly implement OSHA fall protection standards?

### First Aid

What are the requirements as prescribed by OSHA for first aid training?

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### **Hand, Wrist, and Finger Safety**

How do you protect your employees from hand, wrist, and finger injuries while on the job?

### **Hearing Safety**

Do you require a hearing conservation program at your workplace?

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Teach all employees to properly use, don, and doff PPE. Evaluate all work processes to determine if personal protective equipment is required and what PPE is needed.

### **Respiratory Protection**

Do your employees work in environments requiring respiratory protection? Are your employees properly trained on the use and maintenance of these protection devices?

### **Safety Showers and Eyewashes**

Do you follow OSHA-specific requirements for safety showers and eyewashes?

## **Facility Safety**

Facility safety regulations ensure that facilities are safe for both employees and visitors.

### **Confined Spaces**

Do you require a confined space program at your workplace?

### **Electrical Safety**

Have you established an electrical safety plan at your workplace and put preventive measures in place?

### **Ergonomics**

Have you addressed ergonomics-related injuries in both your production and office environments?

### **Fire Safety**

Do you have the correct fire extinguishers in place? Are they properly maintained? Do your employees know what to do in case of a fire?

### **Indoor Air Quality**

Have you monitored your work areas for indoor air quality problems? Do you know what to look for and how to address potential risks?

### **Lockout/Tag Out**

Do you have controls in place to protect workers from the accidental exposure to energy sources?

### **Material Handling**

Do your employees know how to handle job-related materials?

### **Office Safety**

Do you have an office safety plan in place? Are you sure everything you need is included?

### **Slips, Trips, and Falls**

Do you monitor walking and working surfaces for hazards that may result in slips, trips, or falls?

## **Tools and Equipment**

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This category of regulations ensures that employees know how to safely use and maintain tools and equipment in the workplace, such as:

#### **Compressed Gases**

Do your employees know and understand how to safely use compressed gas cylinders?

#### **Computer Safety**

Do you have protective measures in place to address the repetitive injury issues associated with computers?

#### **Crane Safety**

Does your team know and understand how to operate and work around your cranes? Do you have a crane safety program and checklists in place to prevent accidents and injuries?

#### **Driving Safety**

Have you adopted a defensive driving program for your drivers?

#### **Forklift Safety**

Do you have certified forklift drivers at your workplace? Have other team members been trained to effectively work around forklifts?

#### **Hand and Power Tool Safety**

Have your employees been trained how to safely use the hand and power tools required for their jobs?

#### **Ladder Safety**

Do your employees know how to select the correct ladder for the job?

#### **Machine Guarding**

Do you regularly inspect your workplace to ensure all machine guarding is in place and not removed? Do you follow maintenance recommendations on your equipment to ensure guarding is functioning properly?

#### **Rigging Safety**

Do your employees know and understand correct rigging procedures?

#### **Scaffolding Safety**

Do you have supported/suspended scaffolding procedures in place?

#### **Welding Safety**

Are your employees trained on the safety precautions identified by OSHA for the various types of welding activities? Do you feel your employees are safe while working around welders?

## **Behavior and Attitude**

Behavior and attitude regulations answer the question, “How do you address the behaviors of employees and workplace visitors that may have an adverse effect on the safety and health of your team?”

#### **Conflict Resolution**

How does your organization deal with conflict?

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### **Drug and Alcohol Abuse**

Do you have drug and alcohol prevention policies established?

### **Fitness and Wellness**

Do you promote the fitness and health of your employees?

### **Harassment**

How does your firm deal with employee and sexual harassment? Do you have measures in place to help protect employees from harassment?

### **Safety Housekeeping**

Do you have a clean workplace?

### **Safety Orientations**

Have you developed a thorough safety orientation program that addresses all the work processes an employee is responsible to perform and the safety precautions they are required to take?

### **Workplace Stress**

Have you addressed issues associated with job stress and provided enough relief to employees to make sure stress does not expose them to other safety hazards?

### **Workplace Violence**

Do you have a violence protection policy in place at your workplace?

## **OSHA in the Healthcare Workplace**

Healthcare workers face a number of serious safety and health hazards. These include: blood borne pathogens and biological hazards, potential chemical and drug exposures, waste anesthetic gas exposures, respiratory hazards, ergonomic hazards from lifting and repetitive tasks, laser hazards, workplace violence, hazards associated with laboratories, and radioactive material and x-ray hazards.

### **Organizational Safety Culture**

Incidences of work-related injuries and illnesses among healthcare workers have a significant impact on the employees, their families, healthcare institutions, and ultimately on patient safety. It is not surprising that patient and employee safety often go hand-in-hand.

Hazards to healthcare workers caused by a lapse in infection control, fatigue, or faulty equipment may result in injury or illness, not only to workers, but also to patients and others in the institution. Workers who are concerned for their safety or health, in a work environment in which their safety and health is not perceived as a priority, will not be able to provide error-free care to patients. Therefore, efforts to reduce the rate of medical errors must be linked with efforts to prevent work-related injury and illness if they are to be successful.

Several studies have found organizational factors to be the most significant predictor of safe work behaviors. Studies have shown compliance with standard precautions increased when workers felt that their institution had a strong commitment to safety and targeted interventions at improving organizational support for employee health and safety.



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## Injury and Illness Prevention Programs – Moving Toward Injury Free Healthcare

An injury and illness prevention program is a proactive process to help employers find and fix workplace hazards before workers are hurt. Such programs have been proven to help employers and society reduce the personal, financial, and societal costs that injuries, illnesses, and fatalities impose.

A basic prerequisite for preventing injuries and illnesses is understanding the type, location, and underlying reason for their occurrence in the workplace. This information can be found documented in the employer's OSHA 300 log. Through careful review and analysis of the log, the employer can develop a roadmap to prevention and tailor corrective actions specific to the situations found in his or her workplace.

Programs with strong management commitment and active worker participation are effective in reducing injury risk, while "paper" programs who lack commitment and participation prove to be ineffective. Strong and visible management leadership is perhaps the most critical element of an effective injury and illness prevention program. Worker participation makes an important contribution to an employer's bottom line.

## Reporting Workplace Safety Concerns and Employee's Rights

As you can see, OSHA affects many aspects of the Healthcare worker's environment, job, and culture. Many of these standards are common sense and fall under the general duty clause. Remember that employee and patient safety go hand-in-hand. When ensuring patient safety, you are also making your workplace safe for you and your peers.

Workers may file a complaint to have OSHA inspect their workplace if they believe that their employer is not following OSHA standards, or that there are serious hazards. By law employees have a right to file a complaint or ask a question with OSHA by calling 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or by printing the complaint form and mailing, or faxing, it to your local OSHA office. Complaints that are signed by an employee are more likely to result in an inspection. Every question or report is completely confidential. Every employee is protected by law to report any complaint without being punished by their employer. OSHA does not give employees the right to leave work. If the employee feels unsafe the employer should be notified immediately. If the employer refuses to fix the problem OSHA should be notified as soon as possible. If there is not enough time to fix the problem, or the employer cannot fix the problem, remain at work until the employer requests you to go home.

For other valuable worker protection information, such as Workers' Rights, Employer Responsibilities, and other services OSHA offers, visit OSHA's Workers' page.

## OSHA Violations and Penalties

OSHA completes various inspections to ensure employers and facilities are following OSHA safety and health regulations. OSHA will issue citations for anyone violating OSHA rules and regulations and establish penalties according to the violation. Types of violations include:

- **Non-serious Violation:** This violation effects safety and health but doesn't result in death or serious injury.

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- **Serious Violation:** This violation either causes, or could potentially cause, death or serious injury.
  - **Willful Violation:** This violation purposefully and knowingly committed by the employer.
  - **Repeated Violation:** Repeated violations of OSHA rules and regulations.
  - **Failure to Correct Previous Violations:** Refusing, or failing, to correct any previous violation.

## Know your Rights

Under federal law, you are entitled to a safe workplace. Your employer must provide a workplace free of known health and safety hazards. If you have concerns, you have the right to speak up about them without fear of retaliation. You also have the right to:

- Be trained in a language you understand
- Work on machines that are safe
- Be provided required safety gear, such as gloves or a harness and lifeline for falls
- Be protected from toxic chemicals
- Request an OSHA inspection, and speak to the inspector
- Report an injury or illness, and get copies of your medical records
- See copies of the workplace injury and illness log
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses
- Get copies of test results done to find hazards in the workplace

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