OSHAcademy™
Occupational Safety & Health Training

Essentials of Occupational Safety and Health

This course is created specifically for employees in an occupational safety and health setting. You will learn how to classify hazardous chemicals in your workplace. This course also provides information on how to create a safety and health program to protect yourself and your co-workers.

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OSHAcademy Course 601 Study Guide

Essentials of Occupational Safety and Health

This study guide is designed to be reviewed off-line as a tool for preparation to successfully complete OSHAcademy Course 601.

Read each module, answer the quiz questions, and submit the quiz questions online through the course webpage. You can print the post-quiz response screen which will contain the correct answers to the questions.

The final exam will consist of questions developed from the course content and module quizzes.

We hope you enjoy the course and if you have any questions, feel free to email or call:

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Contents

Course Introduction

This course is created specifically for employees in an occupational safety and health setting. You will learn how to classify hazardous chemicals in your workplace and also how you can help create the workplace hazardous communications program to protect yourself and your co-workers.

There are two different types of hazardous material employees need to worry about: flammable and combustible liquids. These liquids are, in short, liquids that can burn. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential when working with these types of liquids. Skin and eye contact needs to be avoided. This course outlines the various types of PPE to protect you, as an employee.

Good housekeeping in your workplace is essential to help prevent slips, trips and falls. There are several components to protect yourself and your co-workers. You will learn how to plan ahead, assign responsibilities and implement a program to keep housekeeping part of the daily routine.

Workplace violence is emerging into a big problem in our society. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 requires employers to provide a safe and healthful working environment. If you recognize violence in your workplace, what can you do? You need to make sure your company has a workplace violence program in place to protect them.

You, as an employee, also need to be involved in creating a workplace safety and health program for your company. You play a crucial role in this responsibility. You can help review and improve the program and you can also volunteer to participate on the safety committee.

This course is designed to be taken with OSHAcademy's program, "Occupational Safety and Health for the Employee."

This is a lot of information! Let's get started with the first module!

Module 1: Hazard Communications

More than 30 million workers in the United States are potentially exposed to one or more chemical hazards. There are an estimated 650,000 existing hazardous chemical products, and hundreds of new ones are being introduced annually. This poses a serious problem for exposed workers and their employers.

The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) - 29 CFR 1910.1200 (http://www.osha.gov/dsg/hazcom/index.html) provides workers exposed to hazardous chemicals with the identities and hazards of those materials, as well as appropriate protective measures. When workers have such information, they are able to take steps to protect themselves from experiencing adverse effects from exposure.

Employees need to be familiar with OSHA's hazard communication standards to help save lives and avoid OSHA citations. Take a look at the top 10 most cited standards for the FY 2013 (National Safety Council).

1. Fall protection (1926.451)
2. Hazard Communication (1910.1200)
3. Scaffolding (1926.451)
4. Respiratory protection (1910.134)
5. Electrical, Wiring (1910.305)
6. Powered Industrial Trucks (1910.178)
7. Ladders (1926.1053)
8. Lockout/Tagout (1919.147)
9. Electrical, General 1910.303)
10. Machine Guarding (1910.212)

Protection under the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) includes all workers exposed to hazardous chemicals in all industrial sectors. This standard is based on a simple concept - that employees have both a need and a right to know the hazards and the identities of the

chemicals they are exposed to when working. They also need to know what protective measures are available to prevent adverse effects from occurring.

Requirements

The HCS established uniform requirements to make sure the hazards of all chemicals imported into, produced, or used in U.S. workplaces are evaluated and that this hazard information is transmitted to affected employers and exposed employees.

The standard provides necessary hazard information to employees so they can participate in, and support, the protective measures in place at their workplaces.

All workplaces where employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals must have a written plan which describes how the standard will be implemented in that facility. The only work operations which do not have to comply with the written plan requirements are laboratories and work operations where employees only handle chemicals in sealed containers.

The written program must reflect what employees are doing in a particular workplace. For example, the written plan must list the chemicals present at the site, indicate who is responsible for the various aspects of the program in that facility and where written materials will be made available to employees.

The written program must describe how the requirements for labels and other forms of warning, material safety data sheets, and employee information and training are going to be met in the facility.

Here is a sample of a Hazard Communication program.

Purpose of the standard

The purpose of the HCS 2012 is to make sure that:

1. the hazards of all chemicals produced or imported are classified, and
2. information about the classified hazards is transmitted to employers and employees.

Classifying the potential hazards of chemicals, and communicating information concerning hazards and appropriate protective measures to employees, may include:

- developing and maintaining a written hazard communication program
- listing hazardous chemicals present

- labeling containers of chemicals in the workplace
- labeling containers of chemicals being shipped to other workplaces
- preparing and distributing SDSs to employees and downstream employers
- developing and implementing employee training programs

The HCS 2012 applies to any chemical which is known to be present in the workplace in such a manner that employees may be exposed under normal conditions of use or in a foreseeable emergency.

Foreseeable Emergency

"Foreseeable emergency" means any potential occurrence such as, but not limited to, equipment failure, rupture of containers, or failure of control equipment which could result in an uncontrolled release of a hazardous chemical into the workplace.

The phrase "known to be present" is important. If a hazardous chemical is known to be present by the chemical manufacturer or the employer, it is covered by the standard.

Hazardous Chemical

"Hazardous chemical" means any chemical which is classified as a physical hazard or a health hazard, a simple asphyxiant, combustible dust, pyrophoric gas, or hazard not otherwise classified.

This includes chemicals to which employees may be exposed during normal operations or in a foreseeable emergency. This means that even though an employer was not responsible for the manufacture of the hazardous chemical, the employer has the responsibility for transmitting information about the hazardous chemical to his or her employees.

Employees, such as office workers or bank tellers who encounter hazardous chemicals only in non-routine, isolated instances are not covered. For example, an office worker who occasionally changes the toner in a copying machine would not be covered by the standard. However, an employee who operates a copying machine as part of her/his work duties would be covered by the provisions of the HCS.

Forms of Hazardous Chemicals

You might think the chemicals which apply to the rule are those in liquid, gas or particulate form. However, the standard's definition of "chemical" is much broader than that commonly used. According to the HCS, chemicals that apply may exist in one of many forms:

Dusts: finely divided particles (Example - wood dust)

Fumes: Even smaller particles usually formed when solid metal is heated and vaporized, and then condenses as tiny particles

*Fibers: S*imilar to dusts but are of an elongated shape (Examples - asbestos and fiberglass)

Mists: Liquid droplets that have been sprayed into the atmosphere

Vapors: Gases formed when liquid evaporates

Gases: Substances which are normally airborne at room temperature. A vapor is the gaseous phase of a substance which is a normally a liquid or solid at room temperature

Solids: Such as metal, treated wood, plastic

Liquids: The most common form in the workplace

The "Prime Directive"

Employers must provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment, and whenever a new chemical hazard the employees have not previously been trained about is introduced into their work area. Information and training may be designed to cover categories of hazards (e.g., flammability, carcinogenicity) or specific chemicals. Chemical-specific information must always be available through labels and SDSs.

Module 1 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. **What was the first most cited OSHA violation in FY 2013?**

    a. hazard Communication
    b. fall Protection
    c. respiratory Protection
    d. machine Guarding

2. **According to the text, if a hazardous chemical is known to be present by the chemical manufacturer or the employer, it is covered by the hazardous communication standard.**

    a. true
    b. false

3. **The following is the definition of "Hazardous Chemical":**

    a. any chemical classified as a physical hazard
    b. any chemical that can cause irritation
    c. any chemical classified as combustible dust
    d. both (a) and (c)

4. **How many workers in the United States are potentially exposed to one or more chemical hazards?**

    a. 100 thousand
    b. 30 million
    c. 50 thousand
    d. 15 million

5. **Employers must provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in their work area.**

    a. true
    b. false

Module 2: Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Overview of the OSHA Standard

OSHA standard 1910.106 pertains to the handling, storage and use of flammable and combustible liquids with a flashpoint below 200 F. The **flashpoint** is the *minimum* temperature at which a liquid gives off enough vapor to form an ignitable mixture. Below is listed the definitions for flammable and combustible liquids in construction and general industry:

	Construction - 1926.155	**General Industry - 1910.106**
Combustible Liquid	A liquid having a flash point at or above 140 °F. (60 °C.) and below 200 °F. (93.4 °C.)	A liquid having a flashpoint at or above 100 °F. (37.8 °C.).
Flammable Liquid	A liquid having a flash point below 140 °F. and having a vapor pressure not exceeding 40 pounds per square inch (absolute) at 100 °F.	A liquid having a flashpoint below 100 °F. (37.8 °C.), except any mixture having components with flashpoints of 100 °F. (37.8 °C.) or higher, the total of which make up 99 percent or more of the total volume of the mixture.

There are two primary hazards associated with flammable and combustible liquids: explosion and fire. To prevent these hazards, the OSHA Standard addresses the primary concern of design and construction, ventilation, ignition sources and storage. This module will discuss each of these issues in more depth.

What are Flammable and Combustible Liquids?

Flammable and combustible liquids are, in short, liquids that can burn. They are classified, or grouped, as either flammable or combustible by their flashpoints.

- Flammable liquids will catch on fire and burn easily under normal working temperatures.

- Combustible liquids burn at temperatures that are usually above working temperatures. Flammable and combustible liquids are present in almost every workplace.

Fuels and many common products like solvents, thinners, cleaners, adhesives, paints, waxes and polishes may be flammable or combustible liquids. Everyone who works with these liquids must be aware of their hazards and how to work safely with them.

Fire or Explosion Hazards

At normal room temperatures, flammable liquids can give off enough vapors to form burnable mixtures with the air. As a result, they can be a serious fire hazard. Flammable liquid fires burn very fast. They also give off a lot of heat and often clouds of thick, black, toxic smoke.

Combustible liquids at temperatures above their flashpoint also release enough vapor to form burnable mixtures with the air. Hot combustible liquids can be as serious a fire hazard as flammable liquids.

Spray mists of flammable and combustible liquids in the air may burn at any temperature, if an ignition source is present. The vapors of flammable and combustible liquids are usually invisible. They can also be hard to detect unless special instruments are used.

Most flammable and combustible liquids flow easily. A small spill can cover a large area of workbench or floor. Burning liquids can flow under doors, down stairs and even into nearby buildings. Materials like wood, cardboard and cloth can easily absorb flammable and combustible liquids. Even after a spill has been cleaned up, a dangerous amount of liquid could still remain in surrounding materials or clothing, giving off hazardous vapors.

Ventilation

Well-designed and maintained ventilation systems remove flammable vapors from the workplace and reduce the risk of fire and health problems. The amount and type of ventilation needed to minimize the hazards of flammable and combustible liquid vapors depend on such things as the kind of job, the kind and amount of materials used, and the size and layout of the work area.

An assessment of the specific ways flammable and combustible liquids are stored, handled, used and disposed of is the best way to find out if existing ventilation controls (and other hazard control methods) are adequate.

Some workplaces may need a complete system of hoods and ducts to provide acceptable ventilation. If flammable vapors are likely to condense, the ducts should have welded joints. Other workplaces may only require a single, well-placed exhaust fan. Use non-ferrous fan blades and shrouds, and explosion-proof electrical equipment in ventilation systems for these liquids. Regular cleaning of the ventilation system will decrease the severity of any fires and will reduce the likelihood of spontaneous combustion if some self-heating material is present. Ventilation equipment used to handle solvent vapors should meet the relevant fire code requirements.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Skin and eye contact needs to be avoided when working near flammable or combustible liquids. Safety glasses with side shields, laboratory coats (coveralls are acceptable in shop settings) and closed-toe shoes need to be worn when handling these materials. This is only minimum protection and must be upgraded if necessary. Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as chemical goggles, face shields, chemical aprons, and chemical resistant gloves and respiratory protection MUST be worn if there is a greater chance of chemical exposure. An emergency eyewash and safety shower should be located in all areas where flammable or combustible liquids are used. If there is skin or eye contact, then flush the affected area for at least 15 minutes and report to your employer for evaluation and treatment.

What about emergencies?

Even if employees take all the necessary precautions to protect themselves from hazardous material spills, they still need to be ready to handle emergencies safely. In emergencies like chemical fires and spills, act fast.

- Leave the area at once if you are not trained to handle the problem or if it is clearly beyond your control.
- Alert other people in the area of the emergency.
- Call the fire department immediately.
- Report the problem to the people responsible for handling emergencies where you work.
- Obtain first aid if you have been exposed to harmful chemicals and remove all contaminated clothes. Emergency eyewash stations and safety showers should be present wherever accidental exposure to materials that can damage skin or eyes might occur.

Only specially trained people, equipped with the proper tools and protective equipment, should handle the emergency. Nobody else should go near the area until it is declared safe.

In closing, planning, training, and practicing for emergencies are important so everyone knows what they must do.

Module 2 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. **Choose the answer below that is NOT a characteristic of flammable or combustible liquids.**

    a. flammable liquids will catch on fire
    b. combustible liquids can burn easily
    c. both combustible and flammable liquids are rare in most workplaces
    d. most flammable and combustible liquids are easy to clean up

2. **According to the text, a well-designed ventilation system will remove flammable vapors from the workplace.**

    a. true
    b. false

3. **If there is skin or eye contact with a flammable or combustible liquid, how long should you flush the affected area?**

    a. 20 minutes
    b. until it stops hurting
    c. 15 minutes
    d. 30 minutes

4. **How should an employee handle a hazardous material spill?**

    a. run away, even if you are completely trained to handle the emergency
    b. don’t do anything, wait until the spill dissipates
    c. report the problem to the people responsible for handling emergencies where you work
    d. don’t try anything and obtain first aid for yourself or others

5. **An emergency eyewash and safety shower should be located in all areas where flammable or combustible liquids are used.**

    a. true
    b. false

Module 3: Walking and Working Surfaces

Slips, trips, and falls constitute the majority of general industry accidents. They cause 15% of all accidental deaths, and are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of death.

Click here for a checklist to test your compliance with OSHA's walking and working surfaces standards for the general industry or visit http://www.oshatrain.org/courses/mods/601/walking_working_surface_checklist.pdf.

Good Housekeeping

It has often been said that safety and housekeeping go hand in hand. This is very true, especially when addressing the serious issue of slips, trips, and falls. If the facility housekeeping habits are poor, the result may well be employee injuries, ever increasing insurance costs, and regulatory citations. If an organization's facilities are noticeably clean and well organized, it is a good indication its overall safety program is effective as well. In addition to safety, disorderly work environments can negatively impact the morale of employees who must function in a job site that is dirty, hazardous, and poorly managed.

According to the National Safety Council, workers are injured from slips, trips, and falls more than any other occupational injury. These can often be avoided if proper housekeeping procedures are used. It is not uncommon for a worker to trip on a piece of equipment or tool that they themselves forgot to put away.

Good housekeeping includes picking up, wiping up, and cleaning up.

It includes the prompt removal of scrap and waste. It is reflected in the old adage of "having a place for everything and putting everything in its place." Sometimes housekeeping is delegated to janitorial services. However, like "safety" itself, housekeeping is everyone's responsibility.

Proper housekeeping is a routine. It is an ongoing procedure that is simply done as a part of each worker's daily performance. When each individual does his/her part to keep work areas clean, a successful housekeeping program will be the result.

Every workplace is subject to either good or bad housekeeping. Factories, warehouses, laboratories, kitchens, hospitals, and offices … the list is endless. In all of these diverse areas, good housekeeping can be achieved by establishing a simple three step program.

1. **Plan Ahead** – know what needs to be done, who is going to do it, and what the work area should look like when they're done.

2. **Assign Responsibilities** – if necessary, a person should be specifically assigned to clean up (although personal responsibility for cleaning up after him/herself is preferred).

3. **Implement a Program** – establish housekeeping as a part of the daily routine (an ongoing procedure).

Wet or slippery surfaces

Slips and trips on walking surfaces are a significant portion of injuries reported by covered state agencies. The specific types of surfaces involved in these injuries vary considerably, but some of the more frequently reported are:

- parking lots;
- sidewalks (or lack of);
- food preparation areas and shower stalls in residential dorms; and,
- floors in general.

Traction on outdoor surfaces can change drastically when subjected to environmental factors such as rain or sleet or on indoor surfaces when moisture is tracked in by pedestrian traffic.

Some administrative controls that can be implemented outdoors include the following:

- Keep areas, such as the parking lots and sidewalks, clean and in good repair condition.
- If snow or ice are a factor, additional controls can be implemented to either remove the snow where feasible or, in the case of ice, to treat the surface with sand or other environmentally friendly material. If surfaces are sloped, an additional precaution may be used to temporarily suspend use of the area.
- Use adhesive stripping material or anti-skid paint wherever possible.

A wide variety of surfaces are available indoors. Although most provide some degree of slip resistance in their original state, there are some exceptions. Highly polished floors can be extremely slippery even when dry and definitely increases the potential for a slip when moisture is present. Other types of floors may not have the built-in hazard such as the decorative ones mentioned, but they present a hazard especially in the presence of moisture, liquid spills, or food. Some agencies have additional unique exposures in this area, such as those with food services departments and bathing facilities for residential care workers.

Control measures that can be implemented indoors to prevent, or minimize as much as possible, injuries caused by wet surfaces include the following:

- Anti-skid adhesive tape is an excellent and economically feasible fix to combat slips or trips.
- During inclement weather conditions, moisture-absorbent mats should be placed in entrance areas. Caution: Improper mats can become tripping hazards.
- Floor mats should have beveled edges, lie flat on the floor, and be made out of material or contain a backing that will not slide on the floor.
- Have readily available and display wet floor signs. An additional caution: A wet floor sign is a valuable tool to attract attention, but should not in of itself be a sole control technique. It is also important that once the hazard is removed the sign is also removed. Otherwise, they become commonplace and lose their intended effectiveness.
- Have a policy or procedure implemented articulating the appropriate action to be taken when someone causes or comes across a food or liquid spill.
- Proper area rugs or mats should be used in food preparation areas or bathing facilities. A more expensive, but effective, measure in these particular areas is chemical treatment of the floor surface, which increases the coefficient of friction when moisture is present.
- Where wet processes are used, maintain adequate drainage, mats, and false floors wherever possible.

Obstacles in Walkways

Injuries can also result from trips caused by reasons other than slippery surfaces, namely inadvertent contact with obstacles or other types of material (debris) and/or equipment. For example, obstacles could include obstructions across hallways, material stacked or dumped in passageways, clutter, and the list can go on.

As mentioned earlier, good housekeeping in work and walking areas is still the most effective control measure in avoiding these types of hazards. This means having policies or procedures in place and allowing time for cleaning the area, especially where scrap material or waste is a by-product of the work operation. Keep aisles and corridors clean, clear, and in good repair to the maximum extent possible. This is especially true in office environments where there is a common tendency to store or stack material, especially boxes, in hallways and corridors. Not

only is this an unsafe practice conducive to a tripping hazard, but also a source of fuel in the event of a fire.

What is a fall hazard?

A fall hazard is anything in the workplace that could cause an unintended loss of balance or bodily support and result in a fall. Fall hazards cause accidents such as the following:

- A worker walking near an unprotected leading edge trips over a protruding board.
- A worker slips while climbing an icy stairway.
- A makeshift scaffold collapses under the weight of four workers and their equipment.
- A worker carrying a sheet of plywood on a flat roof steps into a skylight opening.

Fall hazards are foreseeable. You can identify them and eliminate or control them before they cause injuries.

Identify hazardous work areas

Determine if tasks could expose you or others to the following fall hazards:

- Holes in walking/working surfaces that they could step into or fall through.
- Elevated walking/working surfaces six feet or more above a lower level.
- Skylights and smoke domes that workers could step into or fall through.
- Wall openings such as those for windows or doors that workers could fall through.
- Trenches and other excavations that workers could fall into.
- Walking/working surfaces from which workers could fall onto dangerous equipment.
- Hoist areas where guardrails have been removed to receive materials.
- Sides and edges of walking/working surfaces such as established floors, mezzanines, balconies, and walkways that are 6 feet or more above a lower level and not protected by guardrails at least 39 inches high.
- Ramps and runways that are not protected by guardrails at least 39 inches high.

- Leading edges - edges of floors, roofs, and decks - that change location as additional sections are added.

- Wells, pits, or shafts not protected with guardrails, fences, barricades, or covers.

Identify fall hazards that you can eliminate

Eliminating a fall hazard is the most effective fall-protection strategy. Ways to eliminate fall hazards:

- Perform construction work on the ground before lifting or tilting it to an elevated position.

- Install permanent stairs early in the project so that workers don't need to use ladders between floors.

- Use tool extensions to perform work from the ground.

- Identify fall hazards that you can't eliminate. If you can't eliminate fall hazards, you need to prevent falls or control them so that workers who may fall are not injured.

- Ways to prevent falls include covers, guardrails, handrails, perimeter safety cables, and personal fall-restraint systems.

- Ways to control falls include personal fall-arrest systems, positioning-device systems, and safety-net systems. Use these fall-protection systems only when you can't eliminate fall hazards or prevent falls from occurring.

Consider other factors that could increase the risk of falls

Will tasks expose workers to overhead power lines? Will they need to use scaffolds, ladders, or aerial lifts on unstable or uneven ground? Will they be working during hot, cold, or windy weather? Consider ergonomics. Will workers need to frequently lift, bend, or move in ways that put them off balance? Will they be working extended shifts that could contribute to fatigue?

Module 3 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. **According to the text, slips, falls and trips cause _____ of all accidental deaths.**

    a. 20 percent
    b. 15 percent
    c. 25 percent
    d. 10 percent

2. **According to the text, what does good housekeeping consist of in the workplace?**

    a. picking up
    b. wiping up
    c. cleaning up
    d. both (a) and (c)
    e. all of the above

3. **Good housekeeping procedures can be MOST accomplished by _____:**

    a. planning ahead, assigning responsibilities, and implementing a program
    b. each employee needs to be responsible for their own work space
    c. waiting for someone else to clean up an area
    d. doing nothing

4. **A fall hazard is anything in the workplace that could cause an unintended loss of balance or bodily support and result in a fall.**

    a. true
    b. false

5. Which of the choices below are fall hazards?

a. Ramps and runways that are not protected by guardrails at least 39 inches high.
b. Working surfaces from which workers could fall onto dangerous equipment.
c. Elevated working surfaces two feet or more above a lower level.
d. both (a) and (b)

Module 4: Preventing Workplace Violence

Across the nation, violence in the workplace is emerging as a significant occupational hazard. All too frequently, employees become victims of violent acts that result in substantial physical or emotional harm. For injured or threatened employees, workplace violence can lead to medical treatment, missed work, lost wages, and decreased productivity.

For many occupations, workplace violence represents a serious occupational risk. Violence at work can take many forms: harassment, intimidation, threats, theft, stalking, assault, arson, sabotage, bombing, hostage-taking, kidnapping, extortion, suicide, and homicide. For each murder, there are countless other incidents of workplace violence in which victims are threatened or injured.

Here are some recent statistics for workplace violence:

- 506 workplace homicides occurred in the United States in 2010.
- 79 percent of 2010 workplace homicides in the United States were shootings.
- Assaults and attacks-including homicide- make up 18 percent of all fatal occupational injuries and are the second-leading cause of such injuries.
- Workplace homicides declined 7 percent in 2010 to the lowest-ever recorded total by fatality census. However, workplace homicides involving women increased 13 percent in 2010.

Source: Workplace Violence. (2012) The National Center for Victims of Crime. Retrieved from http://www.victimsofcrime.org/library/crime-information-and-statistics/workplace-violence

Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970

The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act's General Duty Clause requires employers to provide a safe and healthful working environment for all workers covered by the OSH Act of 1970. This act was passed to prevent workers from being killed or seriously harmed at work. The law requires employers to provide their employees with working conditions that are free of known dangers. If there is a recognized violence hazard in the workplace and employers do not take feasible steps to prevent or abate it, employers can be cited. Workers may file a complaint to have OSHA inspect their workplace if they believe their employer isn't following OSHA standards or there are serious hazards.

Training Violence Prevention

Training is a critical component of any prevention strategy. Training is necessary for employees, supervisors, and the staff members of each department who may be involved in responding to an incident of workplace violence. Training and instruction on workplace violence ensures that all staff is aware of potential hazards and how to protect themselves and their co-workers through established prevention and control measures. While most everyone agrees there are clear warning signs before most acts of workplace violence, what action should be taken varies.

Nevertheless, making information available to employees about the potential for violence in the workplace, how to recognize the early warning signs of a troubled or potentially violent person, and how to respond to such a person, could save a life.

Not all individuals who are distraught over services (or lack thereof) or their termination of employment will become violent. The primary type of training that may be beneficial to all employees is that which concentrates on conflict resolution.

Advantages of Written Policies

Once a workplace violence program is ready to be implemented, companies must decide whether to issue a written policy statement.

Company programs can also be implemented without a written policy statement. In these companies, employees are often given information about the program (especially whom to call) in training sessions, on posters, in newsletter articles, or by other similar methods. Companies have an inherent right to take action against employees who engage in disruptive or threatening behavior whether or not they have issued a written policy statement.

A workplace violence policy statement should convey that:

- All employees are responsible for maintaining a safe and healthful work environment;
- The policy covers not only acts of physical violence, but harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior;
- The policy covers incidents involving all interactions between:
    - supervisor to employee
    - employee to employee
    - employee to supervisor

- employee to non-employee
- non-employee to employee;

- The company will respond appropriately to all reported incidents;
- The company will act to stop inappropriate behavior; and
- Supervisors and all of the departments involved in responding to incidents will be supported by company management in their efforts to deal with violent and potentially violent situations.

Employee training

All employees should know how to report incidents of violent, intimidating, threatening and other disruptive behavior. All employees should also be provided with phone numbers for quick reference during a crisis or an emergency. Workplace violence prevention training for employees may also include other topics. Those topics include an explanation of the company's workplace violence policies, ways to prevent or diffuse volatile situations or aggressive behavior, how to deal with hostile persons, and personal security measures within the company.

Unfortunately, it appears that violence isn't decreasing in our society. Ultimately, this violence is being played out in the workplace. For legal and human reasons, businesses can no longer choose to ignore this important issue. These guidelines were created to help you in planning how your organization can address this issue. OSHA's violence prevention guidelines are an essential component to workplace safety and health programs.

OSHA recognizes the importance of effective safety and health program management in providing safe and healthful workplaces. OSHA believes that the performance oriented approach of the guidelines provides employers with flexibility in their efforts to maintain safe and healthful working conditions. OSHA has additional information to help you with this and many other safety and health issues.

Module 4 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. **In 2010, what percentage of workplace homicides in the United States were shootings?**

    a. 80 percent
    b. 79 percent
    c. 25 percent
    d. 50 percent

2. **If there is a recognized violence hazard in the workplace and employees do not take feasible steps to prevent or abate it, _____.**

    a. employers can face penalties from the CDC
    b. employers cannot be sited by OSHA
    c. employers can face criminal charges
    d. employers can be cited

3. **Companies have an inherent right to take action against employees who engage in disruptive or threatening behavior _____.**

    a. only if they have a written policy on violence prevention
    b. when they have given employees formal written notice
    c. whether or not they have issued a written policy statement
    d. if the employees agree to the action taken

4. **The violence prevention policy covers all of the following, EXCEPT _____.**

    a. harassment
    b. difference of opinion
    c. intimidation
    d. disruptive behavior

5. Which of the following should always be a part of violence prevention training?

a. Tactics on how to use offensive techniques to combat violence
b. Ability to confuse others displaying intimidating behaviors
c. How to lay down and play dead until the crisis is over
d. How to report incidents and using emergency phone numbers

Module 5: Safety and Health Programs

A “workplace safety and health program” is a term that describes what people, business owners, managers and employees do to prevent injuries and illnesses at their workplace. A workplace safety and health program is just a concept, but it is an important one.

Elements of a Safety Program

There are several essential elements to consider when creating an effective safety and health program within a company.

Effective programs have clear principles that focus on priorities and guide program design. Program development also involves an initial inventory and evaluation of existing programs and policies within the company. Programs should reflect a comprehensive view of health. Remember, behavioral health, mental health, and physical health are all important components to remember. The system should also focus on ways to eliminate recognized occupational hazards in the work environment. Some changes in the work area (such as reduction in toxic exposures or improvement in work station design and flexibility) benefit all workers. The employees’ willingness to participate in worksite health-directed programs may depend on their perceptions of whether the work environment is truly health supportive. Employers should change the physical and organizational work environment to support the health goals of its employees. For example, blue collar workers who smoke are more likely to quit if workplace dusts, fumes and vapors are controlled and workplace smoking policies are in place.

The effective program should also be tailored to the specific workplace and the diverse needs of the workers. Workplaces vary in size, sector, product, design, location and worker characteristics. Successful programs recognize this diversity and are designed to meet the needs of both the individuals and the enterprise. Effective programs are responsive and attractive to a diverse workforce. One size does NOT fit all and flexibility is necessary.

Also, make sure the program lasts. Programs should be designed with a long-term outlook to assure sustainability. Remember, short-term approaches also have short-term value. Programs that are aligned with the core values of the enterprise tend to stick around! There should be sufficient flexibility to assure responsiveness to changing workforce and market conditions.

Employee Involvement

The best program occurs when everyone shares responsibility for their protection. For that to happen, all employees must know they are helping to develop the program. Employees at all levels should be actively involved in finding and correcting safety and health problems. In other words, effective safety and health programs involve the employee who has a stake in its

success. One of the best ways to involve employees is through a safety committee. A safety committee is a group of employees, representing labor and management, who are responsible for promoting workplace safety and health. Employees can volunteer to be part of the committee or they can be nominated by their peers.

Below is a list of examples of employee involvement in a safety and health program.

- Employees help review and improve the program.
- Employees take safety education and training classes. They can identify hazards and suggest how to eliminate or control them.
- Employees volunteer to participate on the safety committee.

Employee participation means they are encouraged to participate fully in the safety and health program. That includes the review and investigation of injuries and illnesses, periodic workplace inspections, regular safety and health meetings, and recommendations to the employer with respect to the administration of the program elements. Effective employee involvement includes the right of employees to ask for outside opinions and information on safety and health questions that are related to the workplace. Also, under OSHA standards, employees are assured they will not be penalized for exercising their rights under workplace safety and health programs.

Program Implementation

When forming an effective safety and health program, be willing to start small and then scale up as time goes on. Although the overall program designed should be comprehensive, starting with modest targets is often beneficial if they are recognized as the first steps in a broader program. For example, target a reduction in injury rates or absences. Effective communication is also essential for a successful program. Everyone with a stake in worker health should have knowledge of what is being done and why it's important to them and their co-workers. Management should also provide periodic updates to employees and needs to keep the program visible through data-driven reports.

You need to remember that besides protecting your employees, taking action on health and safety can also make a major contribution to business success. It will help stop accidents and work-related illnesses. A successful health and safety program will also reduce your accident losses, improve your profit and loss statement and help you become more efficient. Don't think accidents can't happen in your company and, above all, don't wait for things to go wrong and then go for the "quick fix."

State-approved programs

The OSH Act encourages states to develop and operate their own job safety and health programs. Each state program takes responsibility for developing and enforcing workplace safety and health standards in their jurisdiction. These programs cover 40 percent of the nation's workforce, conducting enforcement inspections and providing consultative services. They also provide free training and outreach, encouraging employers and their employees to follow safe and healthful work practices. OSHA approves and monitors all state plans and provides as much as fifty percent of the funding for each program.

Remember, state-run safety and health programs must be at least as effective as the Federal OSHA program.

The following states have approved state health and safety programs:

- Alaska
- Arizona
- California
- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Puerto Rico
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virgin Islands
- Virginia
- Washington
- Wyoming

NOTE: The Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Virgin Islands plans cover public sector (State & local government) employment only.

Click here for more information about OSHA's State OSH Plans or visit https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html.

Module 5 Quiz

Use this quiz to self-check your understanding of the module content. You can also go online and take this quiz within the module. The online quiz provides the correct answer once submitted.

1. **According to the text, a workplace safety and health program describes what is done to prevent injuries and illness at a workplace.**

   a. true
   f. false

2. **How can employees be involved in creating a safety and health program?**

   a. employees are not involved, it is up to management to create an effective program
   g. employees can volunteer to participate on the safety committee
   h. employees cannot exercise their rights under the safety program
   i. employees are ONLY involved in implementing the program

3. **When forming an effective safety and health program, you should be willing to start big and then scale down as time goes on.**

   a. true
   j. false

4. **Effective safety and health programs have _____ principles that focus on _____ and guide program design.**

   a. clear, priorities
   k. unclear, implementation
   l. set, several topics
   m. various, many topics

5. **A successful health and safety program will likely _____.**

   a. reduce a company's accident losses
   n. improve a company's profit and loss statements
   o. help the company become more efficient
   p. all of the above