

24.16: OSHA Inspection

Learning Objectives

- Describe OSHA's inspection process



Alberta Department of Public Health Work Safety Poster

With jurisdiction for approximately 7 million worksites, OSHA prioritizes inspections based on hazard in the following order:^[1]

1. **Imminent danger.** A situation where hazards could cause death or serious harm.
2. **Severe illness or injury.** Based on employer reporting of fatality, severe illness or injury.
3. **Worker complaints.** Investigating worker allegations of hazards or violations.
4. **Referrals.** Notice of hazards referred from other agencies, individuals, organizations or the media.
5. **Targeted inspections.** Inspections focused on high-hazard industries or workplaces.
6. **Follow-up inspections.** To ensure abatement (resolution) of prior violations

Lower priority hazards may be addressed without an on-site inspection, with compliance officers and employers discussing safety and health concerns, findings and corrective actions by phone and in writing.

OSHA's on-site inspections are a six-step process as detailed below.

1. **Preparation.** This includes researching inspection history, determining what standards are more likely to apply based on operations and collecting the appropriate safety gear and testing instruments.
2. **Presentation of credentials.** OSHA compliance officers generally do not provide advance notice of inspections. Employers have the right to require compliance officers to obtain an inspection warrant before entering the worksite.
3. **Opening conference.** The compliance officer will explain why the site was selected for inspection, describe the inspection scope and procedures. The employer selects a representative to accompany the compliance officer during the inspection. An authorized representative of the employees—for example, a union representative—also has the right to accompany an inspector.
4. **Walkaround.** The compliance officer and company representative(s) will walk through the areas of the workplace covered by the inspection, looking for hazards that could lead to employee injury or illness. The officer will also review worksite injury and illness records and note whether the OSHA poster is on display.
5. **Closing Conference.** The compliance officer will hold a closing conference with the employer and the employee representatives to discuss the findings and possible courses of action. The officer will also cover employer rights (e.g., right to content citations and proposed penalties), employee rights and discuss OSHA consultation services.
6. **Results.** If an inspector finds serious hazards or violations of OSHA standards, the agency must issue a citation and proposed penalty within six months. Citations describe OSHA requirements allegedly violated, list any proposed penalties, and give a deadline for correcting the alleged hazards.
7. **Settlement or Appeal.** When OSHA issues a citation, it also extends an offer to discuss the findings with the OSHA Area Director. The objective of this meeting is to arrive at a settlement agreement to eliminate the hazards and resolve the issue.

Alternately, employers can contest the alleged violations and/or penalties. This appeal must be submitted in writing within 15 working days after receipt of results. Contests are forwarded to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission for independent review. Inspection results—citations, penalties, and abatement dates—that are not challenged or settled become a final order of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

? Practice Question

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/18225>

1. "OSHA Fact Sheet." Occupational Safety and Health Administration, United States Department of Labor. Accessed August 20, 2019. ↵

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