

The OSHA On-Site Consultation Program

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) On-Site Consultation Program offers no-cost and confidential occupational safety and health services to small and medium-sized businesses.

Employers can use Consultation Services to:

- find out about potential hazards at their workplaces and how to fix them;
- get advice for complying with OSHA or State Plan standards;
- improve their occupational safety and health programs; and
- get training and education for employees.

Consultation services are provided by highly trained safety and health professionals called consultants, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. Consultants work in On-Site Consultation programs located within state agencies or universities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories. Consultation services are separate from OSHA or State Plan enforcement. However, employers must agree to correct any serious or imminent danger hazards identified by consultants in a timely manner.

Getting Started

Since consultation is a voluntary activity, consultation services can only be provided at the request of the employer. To make a request, contact your [state's Consultation program](#). The consultant will discuss your specific needs with you and set up a consultation visit based on priority, your availability, and the preparation time needed to assist you. We recommend an assessment of your entire workplace, but you may limit the visit to one or more specific safety or health issue.

What Happens During an On-Site Consultation Visit?

Step 1: Opening Conference

When the consultant arrives at your workplace for the scheduled visit, they will be joined by you, management, and the employee representative(s) in an opening conference.



Photo: U.S. Department of Labor

During the conference, the consultant will explain their role as well as employer's rights and obligations, confirm the scope of the visit, and gather other important information such as injury and illness records.

Step 2: Walkthrough

Together, the employer or an authorized representative, employee representative(s), and consultant will examine conditions in your workplace. We strongly encourage maximum employee participation in the walkthrough. Well informed employees can more easily work with you to find and fix potential hazards in your workplace. Also, talking with employees during the walkthrough will help the consultant identify and assess the nature and extent of any hazards.

The consultant will assess your entire workplace or the specific areas you've requested help with and discuss any hazards and applicable OSHA or State Plan standards with you. The consultant will also point out any safety or health risks that might not be covered by OSHA or State Plan standards and discuss actions to protect your employees. Employees may receive safety and health training during the visit, and schedule a formal training session after the visit. The consultant will discuss their observations of your workplace safety and health program and how to make it better.

Step 3: Closing Conference

After the walkthrough, the consultant will review detailed findings with you in a closing conference. You will learn not only what you need to do to improve, but also what you are doing right. At that time, the consultant will review any hazards identified during the walkthrough and how to fix them. You and the consultant will mutually agree to reasonable timeframes to fix any serious or imminent danger hazard that you couldn't fix during the consultation visit. In rare instances, when the consultant finds an "imminent danger" situation during the walkthrough, you must take immediate action to protect and remove all employees from exposure to the hazard until it's fixed.

Step 4: Written Report to the Employer and Hazard Correction

After the closing conference, the consultant will send you a detailed written report explaining the findings. The report will include the List of Hazards which typically includes any serious or imminent danger hazards and the hazard correction due dates. The List of Hazards must be posted in your workplace where it is easily accessible to all employees, electronically or hardcopy. This posting must be for three days or until the listed hazards are corrected, whichever is later. Ultimately, you must fulfil your obligation to correct hazards and verify with the consultant that you have done so in a timely manner, so that each consultation visit achieves its goal — effective employee protection.

Benefits

Employers that use consultation services will see the benefits of an effective workplace safety and health programs, including:

1. Having employees who better understand their roles and responsibilities under the program and what they need to do to effectively carry them out.

2. Complying with safety and health requirements that apply to your workplace.
3. Recognizing and removing hazards from your workplace before they cause an incident.
4. Protecting your employees from injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.
5. Improving employee morale.
6. Increasing productivity rates and assuring product quality.
7. Improving the bottom line by lowering injury and illness rates, decreasing workers' compensation costs, reducing lost workdays, and limiting equipment damage and product losses.

Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)

As a small business employer, you may be eligible for another great benefit — recognition by the state and OSHA through participation in SHARP. This program acknowledges small businesses who have used OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program and demonstrate an exemplary safety and health program. Acceptance of your workplace into SHARP is an achievement that singles you out among your business peers as a model for workplace safety and health. Learn more about SHARP at www.osha.gov/sharp.

How to Contact OSHA

OSHA's mission is to assure America's workers have safe and healthful working conditions free from unlawful retaliation. OSHA carries out its mission by setting and enforcing standards; enforcing anti-retaliation provisions of the OSH Act and other federal whistleblower laws; providing and supporting training, outreach, education, and assistance; and ensuring state OSHA programs are at least as effective as federal OSHA, furthering a national system of worker safety and health protections. For more information, visit www.osha.gov or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

