

# All About OSHA<sup>®</sup>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
U.S. Department of Labor  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)



This booklet provides a general overview of basic topics related to OSHA and how it operates. Information provided does not determine compliance responsibilities under OSHA standards or the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* (OSH Act).

Because interpretations and enforcement policy may change over time, you should consult the agency for the most up-to-date information. Much of it is available at the OSHA website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). The website also includes locations and phone numbers for OSHA offices around the country. If you do not have access to the website, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742). This information is available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: (877) 889-5627.

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Cover photo: Steve Baranowski, Braintree, Massachusetts Area Office

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U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
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In 1970, the United States Congress and President Richard Nixon created the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a national public health agency dedicated to the basic proposition that no worker should have to choose between their life and their job.

Passed with bipartisan support, the creation of OSHA was a historic moment of cooperative national reform. The OSHA law makes it clear that the right to a safe workplace is a basic human right.

Since OSHA's first day on the job, the agency has delivered remarkable progress for our nation. Workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities have fallen dramatically. Together with our state partners, OSHA has tackled fatal safety hazards and health risks. We have established common sense standards and enforced the law against those who put workers at risk. Our standards, enforcement actions, compliance assistance and cooperative programs have saved thousands of lives and prevented countless injuries and illnesses.

Looking to the future, OSHA is committed to protecting workers from toxic chemicals and fatal safety hazards at work, ensuring that vulnerable workers in high-risk jobs have access to critical information and education about job hazards, and providing employers with vigorous compliance assistance to promote best practices that can save lives.

Although our task is far from complete, our progress gives us hope and confidence that OSHA will continue to make a lasting difference in the lives of our nation's workers, their families and their communities.

## OSHA's Mission

Congress created OSHA to assure safe and healthful conditions for workers by setting and enforcing standards and providing training, outreach, education and compliance assistance.

Under the OSHA law, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their workers. For more information, visit OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

## Introduction

On December 29, 1970, President Nixon signed the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* (OSH Act) into law, establishing OSHA. Coupled with the efforts of employers, workers, safety and health professionals, unions and advocates, OSHA and its state partners have dramatically improved workplace safety, reducing work-related fatalities by almost 63 percent.



Photo: James Majors

In 1970, an estimated 14,000 workers were killed on the job – about 38 every day. For 2021, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports this number fell to about 5,190 or about 14 workers per day. At the same time, U.S. employment has more than doubled to over 143 million workers at more than

10 million worksites. The rate of reported serious workplace injuries and illnesses has also dropped markedly, from 10.9 per 100 workers in 1972 to 2.7 per 100 workers in 2021.

OSHA's safety and health standards, including those for asbestos, fall protection, cotton dust, trenching, machine guarding, benzene, lead and bloodborne pathogens have prevented countless work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities. Nevertheless, far too many preventable injuries and fatalities continue to occur. Significant hazards and unsafe conditions still exist in U.S. workplaces; each year more than 3.2 million workers suffer a serious job-related injury or illness. Millions more are exposed to toxic chemicals that may cause illnesses years from now.

In addition to the direct impact on individual workers, the negative consequences for America's economy are substantial. Occupational injuries and illnesses cost American employers more than \$97.4 billion a year in workers' compensation costs alone. Indirect costs to employers, including lost productivity, employee training and replacement costs, and time for investigations following injuries can more than double these costs. Workers and their families suffer great emotional and psychological costs, in addition to the loss of wages and the costs of caring for the injured, which further weakens the economy.

## **OSHA Coverage**

The OSH Act provides workplace safety and health protection to most private sector employers and their workers, and federally covered public sector employers and workers in the 50 states and certain territories and jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions include the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Northern

Mariana Islands, Wake Island, Johnston Island, and the Outer Continental Shelf Lands as defined in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.

### **Private Sector Workers**

Federal OSHA covers most private sector employers and workers in 29 states, the District of Columbia, Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Wake Island, Johnston Island, and the Outer Continental Shelf Lands. Private sector workers in the remaining 21 states and Puerto Rico are covered by OSHA-approved State Plans.

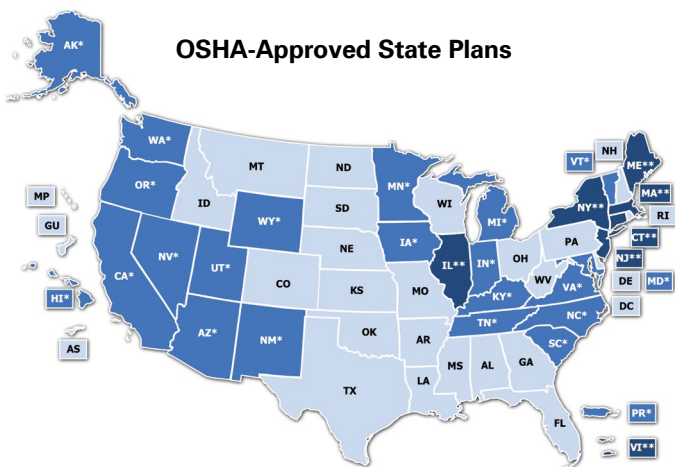
State Plans are OSHA-approved workplace safety and health programs operated by individual states instead of Federal OSHA. The OSH Act encourages states to develop and operate their own workplace safety and health programs and precludes state enforcement of OSHA standards unless the state has an approved State Plan. OSHA approves and monitors all State Plans and provides up to fifty percent of the funding for each program. State Plans must be at least as effective as the Federal OSHA program. To find the contact information for the OSHA federal or State Plan office nearest you, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or go to [www.osha.gov/stateplans](http://www.osha.gov/stateplans).

The following 22 states or territories have OSHA-approved state programs that cover both private sector and state and local government workers:

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



## OSHA-Approved State Plans



- \* OSHA-approved State Plan covering private sector and state/local government workers
- \*\* OSHA-approved State Plan covering state and local government workers only
- Federal OSHA covering private sector workers

Exceptions to State Plan private sector coverage are listed on each State Plan's webpage at [www.osha.gov/stateplans](http://www.osha.gov/stateplans).

### Complaints About State Program Administration

Any interested person or group, including individual workers, with a complaint concerning the operation or administration of a State Plan may submit a complaint to the appropriate Federal OSHA Region (regional offices are listed at the end of this guide). This is called a Complaint About State Program Administration (CASPA). The complainant's name will be kept confidential. OSHA will determine whether an investigation is warranted, and will investigate all such complaints. Where investigated complaints are found to have merit, OSHA may require appropriate corrective action on the part of the state.

## **State and Local Government Workers**

Workers at state and local government agencies are not covered by Federal OSHA, but are afforded OSH Act protections if they work in those states that have an OSHA-approved State Plan. Every State Plan must cover state and local government workers.

OSHA regulations allow states and territories to develop State Plans that cover only state and local government workers. In states with state and local government only State Plans, private sector workers and employers remain under Federal OSHA jurisdiction. Six additional states and one U.S. territory have OSHA-approved State Plans that cover state and local government workers only:

- Connecticut
- Illinois
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Jersey
- New York
- Virgin Islands

## **Federal Government Workers**

OSHA's protection applies to all federal agencies. Section 19 of the OSH Act makes federal agency heads responsible for providing safe and healthful working conditions for their workers. Although OSHA does not fine federal agencies, it does monitor these agencies and conducts federal workplace inspections in response to workers' reports of hazards.

Federal agencies must have a safety and health program that meets the same standards as private employers. Under a 1998 amendment, the OSH Act covers the U.S. Postal Service the same as any private sector employer.

## **Not Covered under the OSH Act**

- The self-employed;
- Immediate family members of farm employers; and
- Workplace hazards regulated by another federal agency (for example, the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the Department of Energy, or the Coast Guard).

## Rights and Responsibilities under OSHA Law

Employers have the responsibility to provide a safe workplace. **Employers MUST provide their workers with a workplace that does not have serious hazards and must follow all OSHA safety and health standards.** Employers must find and correct safety and health problems. OSHA further requires that employers must first try to eliminate or reduce hazards by making feasible changes in working conditions rather than relying on personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, or earplugs. Switching to safer chemicals, enclosing processes to trap harmful fumes, or using ventilation systems to clean the air are examples of effective ways to eliminate or reduce risks.

### **Employers MUST also:**

- Prominently display the official OSHA *Job Safety and Health – It’s the Law* poster that describes rights and responsibilities under the OSH Act. **This poster is free and can be downloaded from [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).**
- Inform workers about chemical hazards through training, labels, alarms, color-coded systems, chemical information sheets and other methods.
- Provide safety training to workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand.
- Keep accurate records of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Perform tests in the workplace, such as air sampling, required by some OSHA standards.
- Provide required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers.\*
- Provide hearing exams or other medical tests required by OSHA standards.
- Post OSHA citations and injury and illness data where workers can see them.

- Notify OSHA within 8 hours of a workplace fatality or within 24 hours of any work-related inpatient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye (1-800-321-OSHA [6742]).
- Not retaliate against workers for using their rights under the law, including their right to report a work-related injury or illness.

\* Employers must pay for most types of required personal protective equipment.

Under OSHA law, workers are entitled to working conditions that do not pose a risk of serious harm.

***Workers have the right to:***

- File a confidential complaint with OSHA to have their workplace inspected.
- Receive information and training about hazards, methods to prevent harm, and the OSHA standards that apply to their workplace. The training must be done in a language and vocabulary workers can understand.
- Receive copies of records of work-related injuries and illnesses that occur in their workplace.
- Receive copies of the results from tests and monitoring done to find and measure hazards in their workplace.
- Receive copies of their workplace medical records.
- Participate in an OSHA inspection and speak in private with the inspector.
- File a complaint with OSHA if they have been retaliated against by their employer as the result of requesting an inspection or using any of their other rights under the OSH Act.
- File a complaint if punished or retaliated against for acting as a “whistleblower” under the more than 20 federal laws for which OSHA has jurisdiction.

For more information, visit OSHA’s Workers’ Rights page at [www.osha.gov/workers](http://www.osha.gov/workers).

## OSHA Standards

OSHA's Construction, General Industry, Maritime and Agriculture standards protect workers from a wide range of serious hazards. Examples of OSHA standards include requirements for employers to:

- provide fall protection;
- prevent trenching cave-ins;
- prevent exposure to some infectious diseases;
- ensure the safety of workers who enter confined spaces;
- prevent exposure to harmful chemicals;
- put guards on dangerous machines;
- provide respirators or other safety equipment; and
- provide training for certain dangerous jobs in a language and vocabulary workers can understand.



Photo: iStock

Employers must also comply with the General Duty Clause of the OSH Act. This clause requires employers to keep their workplaces free of serious recognized hazards and is generally cited when no specific OSHA standard applies to the hazard.

## **The Standards-Setting Process**

OSHA has the authority to issue new or revised occupational safety and health standards. The OSHA standards-setting process involves many steps and provides many opportunities for public engagement. OSHA can begin standards-setting procedures on its own initiative or in response to recommendations or petitions from other parties, including:

- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the research agency for occupational safety and health. (For more information, call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) or visit the agency's website at [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh));
- State and local governments;
- Nationally recognized standards-producing organizations;
- Employer or labor representatives; and
- Any other interested parties.



Photo: iStock

When OSHA is considering whether to develop a new or revised standard, the Agency often publishes a Request for Information (RFI) or an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

(ANPRM) in the *Federal Register* to obtain information and views from interested members of the public. OSHA will also frequently hold stakeholder meetings with interested parties to solicit information and opinions on how the Agency should proceed with the regulation. When OSHA publishes an RFI or ANPRM, interested parties can submit written comments at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), where all information and submissions are made public.

If OSHA decides to proceed with issuing a new or revised regulation, it must first publish a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the *Federal Register* and solicit public comment. The NPRM contains a proposed standard along with OSHA's explanation of the need for the various requirements in that proposed standard.

Interested parties are invited to submit written comments through [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and OSHA will often hold public hearings in which stakeholders can offer testimony and provide information to assist the Agency in developing a final standard. After considering all of the information and testimony provided, OSHA develops and issues a final standard that becomes enforceable.

Each spring and fall, the Department of Labor publishes in the *Federal Register* a list of all regulatory projects underway. The Regulatory Agenda provides a projected schedule for these projects to inform stakeholders of the Agency's regulatory priorities and enable interested parties to take advantage of opportunities to participate in the regulatory process. Current and past issues of the Regulatory Agenda can be accessed on OSHA's Law and Regulations page at [www.osha.gov/law-regs](http://www.osha.gov/law-regs).

## **Input from Small Business**

The *Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996* (SBREFA) gives small businesses help in understanding and complying with OSHA regulations and allows them a voice in developing new regulations. Under SBREFA, OSHA must:

- Produce Small Entity Compliance Guides for some agency rules;
- Be responsive to small business inquiries about complying 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 developing proposed rules expected to significantly affect a large number of small entities through Small Business Advocacy Review Panels.

More information about OSHA standards and the standards-setting process is available on OSHA's website at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). Standards can be viewed on OSHA's Law and Regulations page at [www.osha.gov/law-regs](http://www.osha.gov/law-regs).

## **Enforcement**

### **OSHA Inspection Activities:**

#### **Carrying Out Our Mission**

Enforcement plays an important part in OSHA's efforts to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. When OSHA finds employers who fail to uphold their safety and health responsibilities, the agency takes strong, decisive actions.

Inspections are initiated without advance notice, conducted using on-site or telephone and facsimile investigations, performed by highly trained compliance officers and scheduled based on the following priorities:

- Imminent danger;
- Catastrophes – fatalities or hospitalizations;
- Worker complaints and referrals;



- Targeted inspections – particular hazards, high injury rates; and
- Follow-up inspections.

Current workers or their representatives may file a written complaint and ask OSHA to inspect their workplace if they believe there is a serious hazard or that their employer is not following OSHA standards. Workers and their representatives have the right to ask for an inspection without OSHA telling their employer who filed the complaint. It is a violation of the OSH Act for an employer to fire, demote, transfer or in any way retaliate against a worker for filing a complaint or using other OSHA rights.



Photo: Aaron Sussell, Cincinnati, Ohio

The on-site inspection begins with the presentation of the compliance officer's credentials. The compliance officer will explain why OSHA selected the workplace for inspection and describe the scope of the inspection process, walkaround procedures, employee representation and employee interviews. Following the opening conference, the compliance officer and the representatives will walk through portions of the workplace covered by the inspection, inspecting for hazards that could lead to worker injury or illness. After the walkaround, the compliance

officer will hold a closing conference with the employer and the employee representative to discuss the findings.

When an inspector finds violations of OSHA standards or serious hazards, OSHA may issue citations and fines. A citation includes methods an employer may use to fix a problem and the date by which the corrective actions must be completed.

Employers have the right to contest any part of the citation, including whether a violation actually exists. Workers only have the right to challenge the deadline by which a problem must be resolved. Appeals of citations are heard by the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC). To contact the OSHRC, visit [www.oshrc.gov](http://www.oshrc.gov) or call (202) 606-5370.

OSHA carries out its enforcement activities through its 10 regional offices and more than 85 area offices. OSHA's regional offices are located in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco and Seattle. Contact information for each regional office is available at the end of this guide.

### **Severe Violator Enforcement Program**

OSHA's Severe Violator Enforcement Program (SVEP) was significantly revised on September 15, 2022. The revised program includes updates to enforcement policies and procedures for OSHA's SVEP, which concentrates resources on inspecting employers that have demonstrated indifference to their OSH Act obligations by committing willful, repeated, or failure-to-abate violations. Enforcement actions for severe violator cases include mandatory follow-up inspections and, where appropriate, ensure increased awareness of the enforcement actions at the corporate level, corporate-wide agreements, enhanced settlement provisions, and federal court enforcement under Section 11(b) of the OSH Act. For more information, visit: [www.osha.gov/enforcement/svep](http://www.osha.gov/enforcement/svep).

## **General Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements**

### **OSHA's Reporting Requirements**

All employers must report to OSHA:

- The death of any worker from a work-related incident within 8 hours of learning about it;
- Any work-related inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye within 24 hours.

For more information, visit [www.osha.gov/report](http://www.osha.gov/report).

In addition, employers must report all fatal heart attacks that occur at work. Fatal injuries from motor vehicle accidents on public streets (except those in a construction work zone) and in accidents on commercial airplanes, trains, subways or buses do not need to be reported.

These reports may be made by telephone or in person to the nearest OSHA area office listed at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or by calling OSHA's toll-free number, 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

### **OSHA's Recordkeeping Requirements**

Tracking and investigating workplace injuries and illnesses play an important role in preventing future injuries and illnesses, and for that reason, OSHA requires certain covered employers in high-hazard industries to prepare and maintain records of serious work-related injuries and illnesses.

Employers with more than ten employees and whose establishments are not classified as a partially exempt industry must record serious work-related injuries and illnesses using OSHA Forms 300, 300A and 301, which are available at [www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/forms](http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/forms). A list of partially exempt industries, including establishments in specific low hazard retail, service, finance, insurance or real estate industries is available at [www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/presentations/exempttable](http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/presentations/exempttable). Employers who are required to keep Form 300, the Injury and Illness log, must also post Form 300A, the Summary

of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, in the workplace every year from February 1 to April 30. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov/recordkeeping](http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping).

Employers and workers need accurate, timely information to focus their prevention activities, and OSHA uses this information for many purposes, including inspection targeting, performance measurement, standards development and resource allocation. Injury and illness data also aid employers and workers in identifying possible safety and health hazards at the employer's establishment. OSHA encourages employers to review and investigate patterns of injuries and illnesses, and to conduct investigations of injuries and near misses to prevent similar events in the future.

OSHA is responsible for administering the recordkeeping system established by the OSH Act. OSHA's recordkeeping regulations provide specific recording and reporting requirements which comprise the framework for the nationwide occupational safety and health recordkeeping system. For more information about OSHA's recordkeeping requirements, visit [www.osha.gov/recordkeeping](http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping).

## **Filing a Complaint**

### **Hazardous Workplace Complaints**

If a workplace has unsafe or unhealthful working conditions, workers may want to file a complaint. Often the best and fastest way to get a hazard corrected is to notify a supervisor or employer.

Workers or their representatives may file a complaint online or by phone, mail, email or fax with the nearest OSHA office and request an inspection. A worker may also ask OSHA not to reveal his or her name. To file a complaint, call

1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or contact the nearest OSHA regional, area, State Plan, or consultation office listed at [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). The teletypewriter (TTY) number is (877) 889-5627.

**Written, signed complaints submitted to OSHA area offices are more likely to result in an on-site OSHA inspection.** Most online or unsigned complaints are resolved informally over the phone with the employer. Complaints from workers in states with an OSHA-approved State Plan will be forwarded to the appropriate State Plan for response.

Workers can call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) to request a complaint form from their local OSHA office or visit [www.osha.gov/form/osha7](http://www.osha.gov/form/osha7) to submit the form online. Completed forms can also be faxed or mailed to the local OSHA office (provided at the end of this guide). Include your name, address and telephone number so that OSHA can contact you.

## **OSHA's Whistleblower Program: Protection from Retaliation**

To help ensure that workers are free to participate in safety and health activities, Section 11(c) of the OSH Act prohibits any person from discharging or in any manner retaliating against any worker for exercising rights under the OSH Act. These rights include raising safety and health concerns with an employer, reporting a work-related injury or illness, filing a complaint with OSHA, seeking an OSHA inspection, participating in an OSHA inspection and participating or testifying in any proceeding related to an OSHA inspection.

Protection from retaliation means that an employer cannot retaliate by taking "adverse action" against workers, such as:

- Firing or laying off;
- Demoting;
- Denying overtime or promotion;

- Disciplining;
- Denying benefits;
- Failing to hire or rehire;
- Intimidation or harassment;
- Making threats;
- Reassignment to a less desirable position or actions affecting prospects for promotion (such as excluding an employee from training meetings);
- Reducing or changing pay or hours;
- More subtle actions, such as isolating, ostracizing, mocking, or falsely accusing the employee of poor performance;
- Blacklisting (intentionally interfering with an employee's ability to obtain future employment);
- Constructive discharge (quitting when an employer makes working conditions intolerable due to the employee's protected activity); or
- Reporting or threatening to report an employee to the police or immigration authorities.

If a worker believes an employer has retaliated against them for exercising their safety and health rights, they should contact their local OSHA office right away. You must file a retaliation complaint with OSHA within 30 calendar days from the date the retaliatory decision has been both made and communicated to the worker. **No form is needed, but workers must contact OSHA within 30 days of the alleged retaliation** (at 1-800-321-OSHA [6742]). For more information, please visit [www.whistleblowers.gov](http://www.whistleblowers.gov).

### **If There is a Dangerous Situation at Work**

If a worker believes working conditions are unsafe or unhealthful, OSHA recommends that he or she bring the conditions to the employer's attention, if possible. A worker may file a complaint with OSHA concerning a hazardous working condition at any time. However, workers



Photo: Frank Wenzel, Washington DOSH

should not leave the worksite merely because they have filed a complaint. If the condition clearly presents a risk of death or serious physical harm, there is not sufficient time for OSHA to inspect, and, where possible, a worker has brought the condition to the attention of the employer, the worker may have a legal right to refuse to work in a situation in which he or she would be exposed to the hazard.

If a worker, with no reasonable alternative, refuses in good faith to expose himself or herself to a dangerous condition, he or she would be protected from subsequent retaliation. The condition must be of such a nature that a reasonable person would conclude that there is a real danger of death or serious harm and that there is not enough time to contact OSHA and for OSHA to inspect. Where possible, the worker must have also sought from his or her employer, and been unable to obtain, a correction of the condition. For more information, go to [www.whistleblowers.gov/refusals](http://www.whistleblowers.gov/refusals).

## **Additional Whistleblower Protections**

Since passage of the OSH Act in 1970, Congress has expanded OSHA's whistleblower protection authority to protect workers from retaliation under more than 20 federal laws. These laws protect workers who report violations of various workplace safety, airline, antitrust, anti-money laundering, commercial motor carrier, consumer product, environmental, financial reform, healthcare reform, nuclear, pipeline, public transportation agency, railroad, maritime, securities, and tax laws. Complaints must be reported to OSHA within set timeframes following the retaliatory action, as prescribed by each law. These laws, and the number of days workers have to file a complaint, are:

### **Employee Safety and Environmental Protection Laws**

- ***Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA)*** (90 days). Provides retaliation protection for individuals who report violations of environmental laws relating to asbestos in public or private nonprofit elementary and secondary school systems.
- ***Clean Air Act (CAA)*** (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who, among other things, report violations of this law, which provides for the development and enforcement of standards regarding air quality and air pollution.
- ***Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)*** (30 days). Protects employees who report regulatory violations involving accidents, spills, and other emergency releases of pollutants into the environment. The law also protects employees who report violations related to the cleanup of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites.
- ***Energy Reorganization Act (ERA)*** (180 days). Protects certain employees in the nuclear industry who report violations of the Atomic Energy Act (AEA). Protected employees include



employees of operators, contractors and subcontractors of nuclear power plants licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and employees of contractors working with the Department of Energy under a contract pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act.

- **Federal Water Pollution Control Act (FWPCA)** (also known as the Clean Water Act) (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who, among other things, report violations of the law controlling water pollution.
- **Occupational Safety and Health Act (Section 11(c))** (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who exercise a variety of rights guaranteed under this law, such as filing a safety and health complaint with OSHA and participating in an inspection.
- **Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)** (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who, among other things, report violations of this law, which requires that all drinking water systems assure that their water is potable, as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- **Solid Waste Disposal Act (SWDA)** (also known as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who, among other things, report violations of the law regulating the disposal of solid waste.
- **Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)** (30 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who, among other things, report violations of regulations involving the manufacture, distribution, and use of certain toxic substances.

### **Transportation Services Laws**

- **Federal Railroad Safety Act (FRSA)** (180 days). Provides protection to employees of railroad carriers and contractors and subcontractors of those carriers who report an alleged violation of any federal law, rule, or regulation relating

to railroad safety or security, or gross fraud, waste, or abuse of federal grants or other public funds intended to be used for railroad safety or security; report, in good faith, a hazardous safety or security condition; refuse to violate or assist in the violation of any federal law, rule, or regulation relating to railroad safety or security; refuse to work when confronted by a hazardous safety or security condition related to the performance of the employee's duties (under imminent danger circumstances); request prompt medical or first-aid treatment for employment-related injuries; are disciplined for requesting medical or first-aid treatment or for following an order or treatment plan of a treating physician.

- ***International Safe Container Act (ISCA)*** (60 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who report violations of this law, which regulates shipping containers.
- ***National Transit Systems Security Act (NTSSA)*** (180 days). Provides protection to public transit employees who, among other things, report an alleged violation of any federal law, rule, or regulation relating to public transportation agency safety or security, or fraud, waste, or abuse of federal grants or other public funds intended to be used for public transportation safety or security; refuse to violate or assist in the violation of any federal law, rule, or regulation relating to public transportation safety or security; report a hazardous safety or security condition; refuse to work when confronted by a hazardous safety or security condition related to the performance of the employee's duties (under imminent danger circumstances).
- ***Pipeline Safety Improvement Act (PSIA)*** (180 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who report violations of the federal laws regarding pipeline safety and security or who refuse to violate such provisions.
- ***Seaman's Protection Act (SPA)*** (180 days). Seamen are protected, among other things, for

reporting to the Coast Guard or other federal agency a reasonably believed violation of a maritime safety law or regulation prescribed under that law or regulation. The law also protects work refusals where the employee reasonably believes an assigned task would result in serious injury or impairment of health to the seaman, other seamen, or the public and when the seaman sought, and was unable to obtain correction of the unsafe conditions.

- ***Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA)*** (180 days). Provides retaliation protection for truck drivers and other employees relating to the safety of commercial motor vehicles. Coverage includes all buses for hire and freight trucks with a gross vehicle weight greater than 10,001 pounds.
- ***Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century (AIR21)*** (90 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees of air carriers, contractors, or subcontractors of air carriers who, among other things, raise safety concerns.

### **Health Insurance and Fraud Prevention Laws**

- ***Affordable Care Act (ACA)*** (180 days). Protects employees who report violations of any provision of Title I of the ACA, including but not limited to retaliation based on an individual's receipt of health insurance subsidies, the denial of coverage based on a preexisting condition, or an insurer's failure to rebate a portion of an excess premium.
- ***Anti-Money Laundering Act (AMLA)*** (90 days). Protects employees who report potential money laundering violations to their employers or to the federal government.
- ***Consumer Financial Protection Act (CFPA), Section 1057 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*** (180 days). Protects employees who report

perceived violations of any provision of the Dodd-Frank Act, which encompasses nearly every aspect of the financial services industry. The law also protects employees who report violations of any rule, order, standard or prohibition prescribed by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection.

- ***Criminal Antitrust Anti-Retaliation Act (CAARA)*** (180 days). Protects employees who report criminal antitrust violations to their employers or the federal government, or engage in related protected activities.
- ***Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX)*** (180 days). Protects employees of certain companies who report alleged mail, wire, bank or securities fraud; violations of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) rules and regulations; or violations of federal laws related to fraud against shareholders. The law covers employees of publicly traded companies and companies required to file certain reports with the SEC.
- ***Taxpayer First Act (TFA)*** (180 days). Provides retaliation protection for employees who report underpayment of tax, violations of internal revenue laws, or violations of federal law relating to tax fraud; or engage in other related protected activities.

### **Consumer Safety Laws**

- ***Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA)*** (180 days). Protects employees who report to their employer, the federal government, or a state attorney general reasonably perceived violations of any statute or regulation within the jurisdiction of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). CPSIA covers employees of consumer product manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, and private labelers.
- ***FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)*** (180 days). Protects employees of food manufacturers, distributors, packers, and

transporters for reporting a violation of the *Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act*, or a regulation promulgated under this law. Employees are also protected from retaliation for refusing to participate in a practice that violates this law.

- ***Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)*** (180 days). Prohibits retaliation by motor vehicle manufacturers, part suppliers, and dealerships against employees for providing information to the employer or the U.S. Department of Transportation about motor vehicle defects, noncompliance, or violations of the notification or reporting requirements enforced by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or for engaging in related protected activities as set forth in the provision.

If you believe that you have been retaliated against, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) to be connected to the nearest OSHA office to report your complaint. For more information, visit OSHA's Whistleblower page at [www.whistleblowers.gov](http://www.whistleblowers.gov).

## **OSHA Assistance, Services, and Programs**

OSHA has a great deal of information to assist employers in complying with their responsibilities under OSHA law. Several OSHA programs and services can help employers identify and correct job hazards, as well as improve their safety and health program.

### **Establishing a Safety and Health Program**

Safety and health programs are systems that can substantially reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries and illnesses, while reducing costs to employers.

Visit [www.osha.gov/safety-management](http://www.osha.gov/safety-management) for more information.

### **Compliance Assistance Specialists**

OSHA compliance assistance specialists can provide information to employers and workers



about OSHA standards, short educational programs on specific hazards or OSHA rights and responsibilities, and information on additional compliance assistance resources.

Visit [www.osha.gov/complianceassistance/cas](http://www.osha.gov/complianceassistance/cas) or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) to contact your local OSHA office.

### **No-Cost On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Services for Small Business**

OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program offers no-cost and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses in all states, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. On-Site consultation services are separate from enforcement and do not result in penalties or citations.

For more information or to find the local On-Site Consultation office in your state, visit [www.osha.gov/consultation](http://www.osha.gov/consultation), or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

Under the consultation program, certain exemplary employers may request participation in OSHA's **Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)**. Worksites that receive SHARP recognition are exempt from programmed inspections during the period that the SHARP certification is valid.

### **Cooperative Programs**

OSHA offers cooperative programs under which businesses, labor groups and other organizations can work cooperatively with OSHA. To find out more about any of the following programs, visit [www.osha.gov/cooperativeprograms](http://www.osha.gov/cooperativeprograms).

### **Strategic Partnerships and Alliances**

The OSHA Strategic Partnerships (OSP) provide the opportunity for OSHA to partner with employers, workers, professional or trade associations, labor organizations, and/or other interested stakeholders.

Through the Alliance Program, OSHA works with groups to develop compliance assistance tools and resources to share with workers and employers, and educate workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities.

### ***Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP)***

The VPP recognize employers and workers in the private sector and federal agencies who have implemented effective safety and health programs and maintain injury and illness rates below the national average for their respective industries.



Photo: Thinkstock

### **Occupational Safety and Health Training**

OSHA partners with more than 25 OSHA Training Institute Education Centers at multiple locations throughout the United States to deliver courses on OSHA standards and occupational safety and health topics to thousands of students a year. For more information on training courses, visit [www.osha.gov/otiec](http://www.osha.gov/otiec).

### **OSHA Educational Materials**

OSHA has many types of educational materials to assist employers and workers in finding and preventing workplace hazards.

All OSHA publications are free at [www.osha.gov/publications](http://www.osha.gov/publications) and [www.osha.gov/ebooks](http://www.osha.gov/ebooks). You can also call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) to order publications.

Employers and safety and health professionals can sign-up for *QuickTakes*, OSHA's free, twice-monthly online newsletter with the latest news about OSHA initiatives and products to assist in finding and preventing workplace hazards. To sign up, visit [www.osha.gov/quicktakes](http://www.osha.gov/quicktakes).

## **OSHA Advisory Committees**

OSHA sponsors advisory committees to advise the Secretary of Labor and the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health on workplace safety and health issues.

All OSHA advisory committees have membership balanced between representatives of workers and employers, and most also include other qualified individuals such as government officials, safety and health professionals and members of the public. All committees accept comments from interested individuals. Transcripts and minutes of the meetings are also available to the public on the committee webpages at [www.osha.gov/advisorycommittees](http://www.osha.gov/advisorycommittees).

The four current advisory committees are the:

- Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health (ACCSH), which advises the Secretary of Labor on construction safety and health standards and other matters;
- Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (FACOSH), which advises the Secretary of Labor on matters, policies, plans, and programs relating to the occupational safety and health of federal employees;
- Maritime Advisory Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (MACOSH), which advises the Secretary of Labor on workplace safety and health programs, policies and standards in the maritime industry; and
- National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH), which advises, consults with and makes recommendations to the U.S. Secretaries of Labor (DOL) and Health and Human Services (HHS) on matters regarding the OSH Act.

In addition, OSHA may form short-term advisory committees to advise the agency on specific issues.



## OSHA Regional Offices

### **Boston**

(CT\*, ME\*, MA\*, NH, RI, VT\*)

JFK Federal Building

25 New Sudbury Street, Room E340

Boston, MA 02203

(617) 565-9860 (617) 565-9827 Fax

### **New York City**

(NJ\*, NY\*, PR\*, VI\*)

Federal Building

201 Varick Street, Room 670

New York, NY 10014

(212) 337-2378 (212) 337-2371 Fax

### **Philadelphia**

(DE, DC, MD\*, PA, VA\*, WV)

1835 Market Street

Mailstop OSHA-RO/19

Philadelphia, PA 19103

(215) 861-4900 (215) 861-4904 Fax

### **Atlanta**

(FL, GA, NC\*, SC\*)

Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center

61 Forsyth Street, SW, Room 6T50

Atlanta, GA 30303

(678) 237-0400 (678) 237-0447 Fax

### **Chicago**

(IL\*, IN\*, MI\*, MN\*, OH, WI)

John C. Kluczynski Federal Building

230 South Dearborn Street, Room 3244

Chicago, IL 60604

(312) 353-2220 (312) 353-7774 Fax

### **Dallas**

(NM\*, OK, TX)

A. Maceo Smith Federal Building

525 Griffin Street, Room 602

Dallas, TX 75202

(972) 850-4145 (972) 850-4149 Fax

**Kansas City**

(IA\*, KS, MO, NE)

Two Pershing Square Building  
2300 Main Street, Suite 10030  
Kansas City, MO 64108-2416  
(816) 283-8745 (816) 283-0547 Fax

**Denver**

(CO, MT, ND, SD, UT\*, WY\*)

Cesar Chavez Memorial Building  
1244 Speer Boulevard, Suite 551  
Denver, CO 80204  
(720) 264-6550 (720) 264-6585 Fax

**San Francisco**

(AK\*, AZ\*, CA\*, HI\*, ID, NV\*, OR\*, WA\*, and  
American Samoa, Guam and the Northern  
Mariana Islands)

San Francisco Federal Building  
90 7th Street, Suite 2650  
San Francisco, CA 94103  
(415) 625-2547 (415) 625-2534 Fax

**Birmingham**

(AL, AR, FL (west of the Apalachicola River), KY\*,  
LA, MS, TN\*)

Medical Forum Building  
950 22nd Street North, Room 1050  
Birmingham, AL 35203  
(205) 421-9390

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

## **How to Contact OSHA**

OSHA's mission is to assure America's workers have safe and healthful working conditions free from unlawful retaliation. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) or call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), TTY 1-877-889-5627.

**For assistance, contact us.  
We are OSHA. We can help.**

**Follow OSHA on LinkedIn   
@us-department-of-labor-osha**



U.S. Department of Labor

For more information:

 **OSHA**<sup>®</sup> Occupational  
Safety and Health  
Administration

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA (6742)

