

OSHA: Ready to Help You!

The fatality rate among Hispanic workers troubles me deeply. I am concerned that Hispanics are more likely than others to be injured on the job.--- Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, U. S. Department of Labor

What Is OSHA?

OSHA is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, an agency of the U. S. Department of Labor.

What Does OSHA Do?

OSHA's mission is to ensure that employers provide safe and healthful working conditions for their employees, so that no one is killed or injured on the job or becomes ill due to exposure to hazards in their workplaces.

How Does OSHA Do This?

- Issues regulations, guidelines, and other information to help employers and employees understand job safety and health requirements.
- Conducts workplace inspections to ensure that employers comply with safety and health regulations.
- Provides technical and compliance assistance, and works through partnerships and other cooperative relationships to help employers reduce workplace accidents and injuries.
- Assists employers and workers by answering questions on how to improve safety and health conditions and providing publications and interactive guidance software on its website at www.osha.gov.
- Provides education and training about workplace safety and health issues on request.
- Works with other organizations to share information about safety and health with employers and employees who may not be familiar with their rights and responsibilities and who work in circumstances that make it difficult for OSHA to reach them.

Why Are OSHA Programs Important To Me?

Compared to other population groups, Hispanics are dying in numbers greater than their proportion of the workforce. OSHA wants to work with employers, employees, trade and professional organizations, unions, and community and faith-based groups to reduce injuries, illnesses, and deaths among Spanish-speaking workers.

Pull quote: *The disproportionately high number of work-related deaths suffered by non-English-speaking-- including Hispanic -- workers is of grave concern to us. These workers are among the most vulnerable in America. To improve their safety we must clearly identify the underlying problems and trends contributing to this situation.* --- John L. Henshaw, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health.

What Do I Need to Know About OSHA?

The *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act)* covers most private sector employers and employees in such varied fields as manufacturing, construction, shipbuilding, agriculture, medicine, charity and disaster relief, and private education. Federal OSHA, or an OSHA-approved state program, is responsible for working with employers and employees to

promote safe and healthful working conditions in our nation's workplaces. OSHA is committed to protecting the safety and health of workers regardless of nationality or country of origin.

What Are My Responsibilities Under the OSH Act?

If you are an employer, you must:

- Provide a workplace free from recognized hazards.
- Keep workers informed about relevant OSHA and safety and health matters.
- Comply with OSHA rules.
- Provide training required by OSHA rules.
- Cooperate with OSHA compliance officers.

If you are an employee, you should:

- Comply with applicable OSHA standards.
- Follow all safety and health rules established by your employer.
- Use prescribed protective equipment.
- Report hazardous conditions to your supervisor.
- Contact OSHA if your employer does not correct hazardous conditions.

What Rights Do Employers Have Under OSHA Rules?

As an employer, your rights include:

- Having an opening and closing conference with the OSHA compliance officer during an OSHA inspection and accompanying the compliance officer on the inspection, and
- Asking the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for information on the potentially toxic effects of any substance in your workplace and requesting Health Hazard Evaluations (HHE).

OSHA encourages employers to establish effective safety and health programs. To get help in identifying and fixing safety and health hazards, OSHA encourages small businesses to request free workplace safety and health advice and consultation assistance through state offices funded by OSHA.

What Rights Do Employees Have Under OSHA Rules?

If you are an employee, your rights include:

- Requesting information from your employer on safety and health hazards and precautions as well as reviewing copies of OSHA standards that your employer should have available at the workplace;
- Requesting that OSHA investigate if you believe hazardous conditions or violations of standards exist in your workplace;
- Having your authorized employee representative accompany the OSHA compliance officer during an inspection;
- Receiving adequate information and training on health and safety;
- Requesting a NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation anonymously at your worksite (three or more employees or an organization that represents employees can request an HHE);
- Wearing employer-provided personal protective equipment such as hard hats, goggles, gloves, and earplugs; and
- Talking to an OSHA representative during inspections without fear of being fired or punished by an employer.

Pull quote: *I am committed to guaranteeing that all workers – regardless of immigration status—have a safe workplace.* --- Elaine L. Chao, Secretary, U. S. Department of Labor

How Can OSHA Help Me?

OSHA offers many materials through its local offices, on its website at www.osha.gov, or by toll-free telephone (1-800-321-OSHA). Among the resources available from the agency are:

- Guidance, eTools, and training materials on health and safety topics, including a number in Spanish.
- Publications in Spanish include OSHA 3155, *La Evacuación del Color*; OSHA 3158, *La Evacuación del Frio* OSHA; 3168, *Protejase Contra los Rayos Daninos del Sol*; OSHA 3173, *Todo Sobre la OSHA*; and OSHA 3134, *Exposicion a Patogenos Transmitidos por la Sangre en el Trabajo*.
- Compliance Assistance Specialists, who are available across the nation to help answer questions and provide you with the guidance you need to make sure your workplace is safe and healthful.
- Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines*, which are voluntary guidelines that apply to all worksites. (See Resources section to obtain a copy of these guidelines.)
- The Consultation Program, which provides free, onsite assistance in identifying and correcting hazards. The service is for small- and medium- size businesses, especially ones with hazardous operations.

OSHA also offers several cooperative programs including:

- Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) recognize exemplary workplaces.
- Strategic Partnerships and Alliances provide opportunities for employers, non-governmental organizations, private sector associations, faith-based groups, and others to work with OSHA to improve workplace safety and health and to better disseminate information to employers and employees, including the Hispanic community.

For more detailed information on how to work with OSHA, contact your nearest OSHA office.

How Do I Get More Information About OSHA?

- www.osha.gov, OSHA's user-friendly website, contains a great deal of information, including a Spanish webpage and OSHA publications that can be downloaded or ordered online. A map guides you to the OSHA office nearest you.
- OSHA's toll free number, **1-800-321-OSHA (6742)**, which includes a Spanish option, provides answers to basic questions and offers a referral option to local OSHA offices for more detailed information.
- OSHA's 99 regional and local offices offer a wide variety of information, including technical advice, publications, and audiovisual aids on identifying and resolving workplace hazards.
- All About OSHA*, available in Spanish, and other OSHA publications can be obtained by writing to OSHA Publications Office, 200 Constitution Avenue N.W., N-3101, Washington, DC 20210; or by sending a request by fax at (202) 693-2498, or by calling our toll-free number, **1-800-321-OSHA (6742)**.