

Facts About



Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program

Each year, thousands of Texas employers rely on the expertise of Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) consultants to help them comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards and eliminate workplace hazards. All employers that receive OSHCON assistance accept certain responsibilities to safeguard their employees.

OSHCON recognizes the commitment of the employers it works with that take **extraordinary** measures to exceed the requirements of the OSHA standards. OSHCON consultants can help qualifying employers apply for OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). Participation with OSHCON is just the first step toward a SHARP designation, and employers who receive SHARP are held to very high standards.

The safety and health elements that employers must institute to qualify for SHARP certification will not only help prevent injury and illness to workers, but can also lead to a one- to two-year exemption from programmed OSHA inspections.

About SHARP

SHARP was designed by the U.S. Department of Labor - (OSHA) to encourage and recognize excellence in occupational safety and health among smaller employers. During their preparation for SHARP eligibility, employers have the opportunity to learn how to maintain safe and healthy workplaces through the development and implementation of proven and effective safety and health management systems. Assistance and training are provided by the qualified professionals of OSHCON who are experienced in helping employers develop safety and health management plans.

Employers who receive their first SHARP designation are exempt from programmed OSHA inspections for one year. Subsequent renewals of SHARP may result in two-year exemptions from programmed OSHA inspections.

SHARP Eligibility Criteria

SHARP is available to private Texas employers in high-hazard industries (as defined by OSHA) that:

- have 250 or fewer employees at the worksite that is considering SHARP;
- have 500 or fewer employees corporate-wide;
- have operations limited to a fixed worksite;
- have worked with OSHCON for at least one year;
- receive a comprehensive OSHCON consultative visit; and
- have a Days Away Restricted and Transferred (DART) Rate and a Total Case Rate (TCR) below the national averages for their industries.

SHARP Requirements

As a SHARP participant, you must:

- correct all hazards identified by your OSHCON consultant during the comprehensive visit;
- involve employees in the consultation process;
- maintain your DART and TCR below the national averages for your industry;
- agree to notify your OSHCON consultant before making any changes in the working conditions or introducing new hazards into your workplace; and
- maintain a safety and health management system that, at a minimum, addresses OSHA's 1989 Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines, which include:
 - management commitment;
 - employee involvement;
 - training;
 - inspections; and
 - hazard analysis.

Maintaining a safety and health management system that meets these guidelines is the most challenging requirement of SHARP, but it is the most important component of a safe and healthy workplace.

Comprehensive OSHCON Consultative Visits

A comprehensive OSHCON consultation, which is a requirement for SHARP, gives you and your consultant the opportunity to take an in-depth look at your company and the safety of your employees. When helping you prepare for SHARP, your OSHCON consultant will evaluate several aspects of your business in detail, including:

- a physical review of your workplace (includes on-site examination of records and logs, review of any inspection history, inspection of site conditions at the facility, and assessment of overall safety and health programs);
- interviews with management and employees;
- a hazard study to help identify any existing or potential physical or environmental hazards or unsafe work practices;
- recommendations for improving safety at the facility;
- evaluation of the facility's job safety and health management plan against recognized effective principles, including identifying weaknesses and providing recommendations for improving the plan;
- hands-on training and technical assistance with hazard abatement; and
- a comprehensive report detailing the findings of the consultation.

SHARP Certification and Inspection Exemption

After you satisfy all SHARP requirements, the OSHCON Program Manager can recommend your worksite to OSHA for final SHARP approval and certification. The first time that OSHA formally recognizes your worksite as a SHARP site, you will be granted a one-year exemption from programmed inspections. After one year in the SHARP program, you may request renewal for one- or two-year exemptions, provided that you:

- apply for renewal during the last quarter of the exemption period;
- allow an additional comprehensive consultation to ensure that your exemplary safety and health management system has been effectively maintained or improved;
- continue to meet all eligibility criteria and program requirements; and

If requesting a two-year renewal, you must also agree to conduct an interim-year self-evaluation and to submit a written report to the OSHCON Program Manager that is based on the elements of the 1989 Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines (including OSHA's required injury and illness logs).

SHARP Benefits

The safety and health program management system that you institute, paired with a SHARP certification, has many long-term benefits for your company:

- receive public acknowledgement of your safety efforts;
- reinforce your management's commitment to safety to your employees and customers;
- prevent workplace injuries and illnesses;
- save your company money by reducing workers' compensation, medical, training, and other costs associated with injuries and illnesses;
- protect your company's assets: employees, equipment, supplies, products, and facility; and
- gain OSHA programmed inspection exemption.

Talk to OSHCON about SHARP today!

Call toll-free
1-800-687-7080

or

Find a consultant near you on the
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the Texas Department of Insurance,
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