

OSHA[®] FactSheet

OSHA's Strategic Partnership Program

Created in 1998, OSHA's Strategic Partnership Program is an extended, voluntary, cooperative relationship between OSHA and groups of employers, employees, employee representatives and other interested stakeholders. Partnerships are designed to encourage, assist and recognize efforts to eliminate serious hazards, create effective safety and health management systems, measure results and achieve a high degree of worker safety and health. Partnerships are flexible in design so that employers' unique operational and workplace needs can be considered. Employers involved in Partnerships may reduce illness and injury rates, workers' compensation rates, absenteeism and other costs. Employees benefit from safer workplaces, increased safety and health knowledge and skills, and improved morale.

How Partnerships Work

Working together, OSHA, employers, employees, and other stakeholders identify workplace safety and health issues and develop strategies, goals and performance measures to address these issues. Partnerships are established through a written, signed agreement which usually lasts three to five years. The agreement may be national, regional, or local in scope.

Partners

Partners may include professional or trade associations such as: building contractors or nursing homes; unions such as The United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America or The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers; and employers in industries such as construction, food processing or public warehousing and storage. Partners may be large entities, but most often are small businesses averaging fewer than 50 employees. Other stakeholders may include local/state governments, state Consultation Projects and insurance companies which often contribute expertise and resources.

Requirements

All Partnership agreements must contain core elements such as Partnership purpose, goals and strategies; identification of partners and geographic boundaries; Partnership timeframe or term; Partnership management and operation; effective quantitative and qualitative performance measures linked to Partnership goals; annual eval-

uation responsibilities; OSHA verification procedures; and participant benefits. Finally, the Partnership agreement must be signed by OSHA and its partners.

Benefits

Benefits offered through an OSHA Partnership are commensurate with participating partners' commitment to and success in providing safe and healthy working conditions for their employees. Certain benefits require verification of the partner's worksite by OSHA to ensure that agreement objectives are being met. Benefits to employer partners may include outreach, technical assistance and training such as the free on-site services of OSHA Consultation Projects; deferral from OSHA programmed inspection lists; and/or programmed inspections with a limited scope that focus on specific workplace hazards.

OSHA Responsibilities

Contact Person

A primary OSHA contact is designated for each Partnership. The primary contact communicates regularly with the person(s) responsible for the management of the Partnership.

Verification

Verification is OSHA's process for determining whether Partnership participants are upholding their responsibilities under the agreement. Three possible verification methods exist —offsite, on-site non-enforcement, and on-site enforcement

inspection— one of which is necessary to meet the requirements of the Partnership agreement.

Evaluation

OSHA coordinates the annual Partnership evaluation with input from its partners, to assess how well the Partnership has worked toward meeting its goals.

Inspections

OSHA conducts enforcement inspections in response to formal complaints, workplace accidents or fatalities, chemical leaks and spills, and other significant events.

Employee/Employer Rights and Responsibilities

Participation in Partnerships does not eliminate the rights or responsibilities of employers or employees under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act*.

More Information

For national Partnerships, contact OSHA's Office of Partnerships and Recognition at 202-683-2213. For regional or local Partnerships, contact your OSHA Regional Office by calling 800-321-OSHA.

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.

For more complete information:



U.S. Department of Labor

www.osha.gov
(800) 321-OSHA