



SAFETY ALERT

How To Deal With An OSHA Inspection

Ask to see the credentials of the OSHA inspector if they are not presented to you – just as you would any visitor to your plant. It's for your own personal security as well as the security of all employees. Ask in a positive manner. If they refuse to show their credentials, take the necessary security precautions as instructed by your company policy guidelines

Section 8 of the OSHA act states that “CSHOs (OSHA INSPECTORS) may enter without delay and at reasonable times any establishment covered under the act for the purpose of conducting an inspection.

However, the employer has the right to ask the OSHA inspector to seek a warrant to conduct the inspection prior to entering the facility. If this right is exercised, the employer may refuse entry without such a warrant. Before exercising this right, remember that the inspector is only human, making his/her job more difficult – just to bide more time to prepare for the inspection may cause you more difficulties during the inspection.

Requiring a warrant is your right and should be used if you feel it is necessary to protect your interests.

Once the inspector is in your facility, he/she should abide by the same policies and procedures as any visitor to your plant.

- * Required Personal Protective Equipment must be worn.
- * Removal of all jewelry, etc.

The inspector should conduct an opening conference before conducting an inspection. This is critical because you have a right to know the purpose and reason for the inspection.

The OSHA inspector is at your facility for a specific reason and purpose. The opening conference is designed for the inspector to let the employer know why he/she is there and what to expect during the inspection. If you do not understand the purpose or the reason for the inspection, politely ask the inspector for an explanation. The inspector will probably ask to see your written programs;

- * LOCKOUT/TAGOUT POLICY
- * 300 LOG
- * PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT ASSESSMENT
- * RIGHT to KNOW POLICY

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Have your programs readily available for them to see.

- Take pictures or videos of items pointed out by the inspector.
- Write down everything or consider using a tape recorder.
- If the inspector takes a picture of something in particular, take a similar picture.
- Don't argue with the inspector.
- Don't hurry them around.
- Stay in Control. Coordinate, and facilitate, the actual inspection. Show him/her what they came to see. Determine tour routes and sequence to minimize disruptions to production, and distraction to unaffected employees.
- Do not admit any violation has occurred. Ask for suggested fixes or solutions of conditions the inspector identifies as sub-standard. Whenever possible, make suggested changes immediately while the inspector watches.

Be as helpful and informative as possible within the scope and purpose of the inspection.

Remain upbeat, but don't try to be "best pals" with the inspector. He/she is there to do a job. Treat them with respect, the same as you would like to be treated.

- Be prepared for the closing conference.
- While reserving any admission that a violation has occurred, discuss actions or changes that would satisfy the OSHA rep's concerns. Ask what schedule would be acceptable for such actions. Plan on completing all corrective actions well within the negotiated time frames (i.e. don't agree to time frames you don't believe you can meet.)
- Pay close attention during the walkthrough. In doing so, you will have a good idea of the violations the inspector will discuss.

Beyond the fear of an OSHA inspection or citation, remember that the standards were implemented because industry did not do its job to protect workers and many paid the price with their lives. Therefore, show your commitment to the safety of your employees by taking steps to ensure that you are in compliance with the standards; with or without an inspection.