Welcome to the Hard Hat Training Series!



HARD HAT





History of OSHA

Before OSHA was created, workplace injuries and fatalities were frighteningly common. Back then, labor unions and individual companies were primarily responsible for employee safety. Unfortunately, it often cost less money to replace a dead or injured employee than it cost to implement safety measures in the workplace.











To give you some perspective, consider the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911. The factory was located on the eighth, ninth, and tenth floors of the Asch Building in Manhattan. It employed around 500 people who were mostly immigrant women and girls. They were making women's blouses, otherwise known as shirtwaists back in the day.











To this day, there isn't a clear explanation of what started the fire, though many believe it was an employee throwing a cigarette butt into a fabric scrap bin. To make matters worse, it was company policy to lock the doors to the stairways to prevent employee theft and unauthorized breaks.











As the fire roared, fed by the flammable garment scraps throughout the building, employees succumbed to smoke or jumped from the building to their death. That day, 146 employees died from fire, smoke inhalation, falling, or jumping. The event was infamously remembered as one of the deadliest industrial disasters in U.S. history.













Unfortunately, workplace fatalities, injuries, and illnesses were all too common leading up to OSHA's creation. In 1970, some 14,000 employees were dying each year on the job in the United States. In 1972, 11 serious workplace injuries and illnesses were reported for every 100 employees.













Even in the modern day the statistics are too high:

- Around 5,200 employees are killed annually
- On average, 14 employees die on the job every day
- Approximately 900 Hispanic or Latino workers die annually
- Close to 3 million workplace injuries and illnesses are reported annually













Believe it or not, those numbers are a drastic improvement from the 1970s when OSHA was established. Nowadays, an average of 14 employees die each day; but in 1970, about 38 employee deaths occurred each day. This drastic improvement is due in no small part to the regulations put in place and enforced by OSHA.





OSHA was formed through the OSH Act of 1970, which was signed into action by President Nixon. It was formally introduced on April 28, 1971, tasked with the responsibility of improving workers' safety and health on the job.



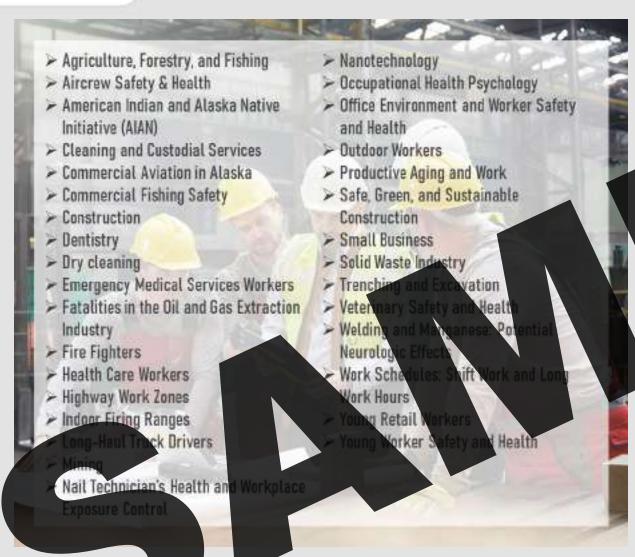












The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) was created alongside OSHA. The organization conducts research on work-related injury and illnesses and makes recommendations for preventing them. NIOSH acts as a part of the Center for Disease Control (CDC). It works with OSHA to establish safety and health regulations in various industries, pictured on the left.

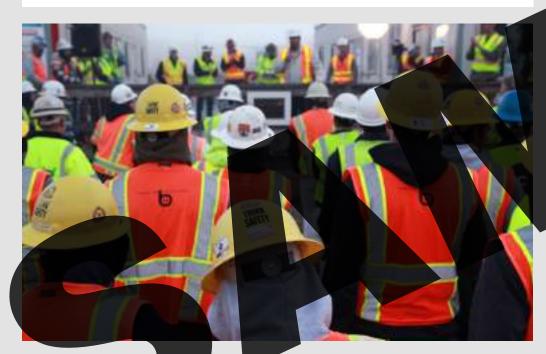






Mission of OSHA

OSHA, like most companies, has a mission statement highlighting the agency's goals, which are "to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance."











OSHA accomplishes this mission by developing workplace safety and health standards. They also provide training programs that are intended to increase knowledge about workplace safety and health and bring awareness to the hazards that affect the lives of many workers each year.





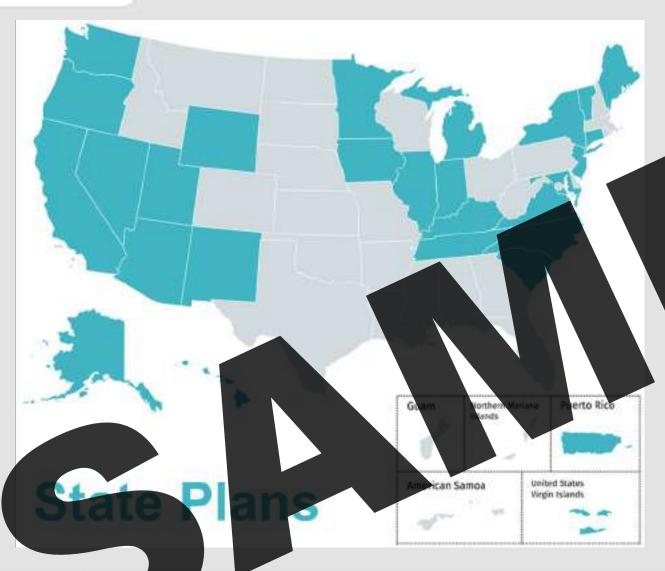












While many states solely rely on federal occupational safety and health regulations, 28 states and territories also have their own State Plans. These programs are operated by the individual state or territory and are monitored by OSHA. State Plans have to be at least as stringent as OSHA in preventing occupational injury and illness. Refer to this map to learn if your state has its own State Plan.





Now that you understand some general information about how OSHA came to be and the organization's structure, we are going to look at the various roles OSHA plays in your workplace. We will begin by learning about standards and regulations. Then we will learn who is covered by OSHA standards and regulations.









Next, we will look at how and why OSHA inspections take place. Then, we will talk about what happens when you violate OSHA standards, including the citation and penalty process.









