



Inspection Priority

OSHA has jurisdiction over approximately 7 million worksites. The agency seeks to focus its inspection resources on the most hazardous workplaces in the following order of priority:

- 1. Immediate threats to life or health** — hazards that could cause death or serious physical harm receive top priority. Compliance officers will ask employers to correct these hazards immediately or remove endangered employees.
- 2. Catastrophic incidents** — employers must report:
 - All work-related fatalities within 8 hours.
 - All work-related inpatient hospitalizations, amputations, or losses of an eye within 24 hours.
- 3. Whistleblowers** — allegations of hazards or violations also receive a high priority. Employees may request anonymity when they file complaints.
- 4. Referrals** of hazards from other federal, state or local agencies, individuals, organizations or the media receive consideration for inspection.

details on alleged safety and health hazards. The employer must respond in writing within five working days, identifying any problems found and noting corrective actions taken or planned. If the response is adequate and the complainant is satisfied with the response, OSHA generally will not conduct an on-site inspection.

On-site Inspection

Pre-inspection — Before conducting an inspection, OSHA compliance officers research the inspection history of a worksite using various data sources, review the operations and processes in use and the standards most likely to apply. They gather appropriate personal protective equipment and testing instruments to measure potential hazards.

On-site inspection — The on-site inspection begins with the presentation of the compliance officer's credentials, which include both a photograph and a serial number.

Opening conference — The compliance officer will explain why OSHA selected the workplace for inspection and describe the scope of the inspection, walkaround procedures, employee representation and employee interviews. The employer then selects a representative to accompany the compliance officer during the inspection. An authorized representative of the employees, if any, also has the right to accompany an inspector. The compliance officer will consult privately with a reasonable number of employees during the inspection.

Walkaround — Following the opening conference, the compliance officer and the representatives will walk through the portions of the workplace covered by the inspection, inspecting for hazards that could lead to employee injury or illness. The compliance officer will also review worksite injury and illness records and the posting of the official OSHA poster.

