OSHA

The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration** (**OSHA**) is an agency of the United States Department of Labor. Congress established the agency under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), which President Richard M. Nixon signed into law on December 29, 1970. OSHA's mission is to "assure safe and healthy working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance". The agency is also charged with enforcing a variety of whistleblower statutes and regulations. OSHA is currently headed by Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor.

The OSH Act assigns to OSHA two principal functions: setting standards and conducting workplace inspections to ensure that employers are complying with the standards and providing a safe and healthful workplace.

By law, employers must provide their workers with a workplace that does not have serious hazards and must follow all OSHA safety and health standards. Employers must find and correct safety and health problems. OSHA further requires that employers must first try to eliminate or reduce hazards by making feasible changes in working conditions rather than relying on personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, or earplugs. Switching to safer chemicals, enclosing spaces to trap harmful fumes, placing yellow warning cones on wet floors, or using ventilation systems to clean the air are examples of effective ways to eliminate or reduce risks.

OSHA standards stipulate which topics/tasks require training, which employees should be trained, how often, the necessary qualifications of the person providing the training, and requirements for training documentation. Each employee must be trained in the tasks, situations, and tools they will use on the job. This training must be provided by a qualified person in a manner (e.g. language and vocabulary) the employee best understands. Training must be performed as often as required for safe operations. Training must be documented and stored for a period of time.

General Industry Standards for training cover safety essentials for workers from walking-working surfaces to procedural training for advanced tools and chemicals. It is necessary to know which standards apply to your business situation and staff.