

Training: Who? What? Where? When? Do You Know?

If you are a business owner or management, you know what training and experience your workers need to do their jobs effectively. But do you know what training and re-training they need to do their jobs safely? The Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division (OR-OSHA) and Washington's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH—formerly WISHA) requires employers to train workers in the safety and health aspect of their jobs. The requirements are not the same for all workplaces, and it is your responsibility to know the requirements that apply at all times. At a minimum you must know what training and re-training is required (and where to find it) to ensure a safe and healthful work environment. These rules apply to all businesses.

One of the most important steps you can take toward developing a safe and healthful workplace is to think seriously about the risks—just as you would any other business decision. Although you may not be able to eliminate all the risks in your workers' environments, you can do a lot to minimize them. Training your workers to do their jobs safely is only a small part. You must also be fully committed to minimizing these workplace risks, and you must have sound safety and health programs that put your commitment into action. You must ensure:

- All management is responsible and committed to preventing occupational injuries
- All injuries have preventable causes
- You involve all workers in on-the-job safety
- You train all workers to do their jobs safely

OR-OSHA and DOSH have general training requirements intended to make workers aware of the overall safety and health aspects of their jobs, and specific training requirements that apply to workers who perform special jobs or tasks. OR-OSHA's safety and health requirements may also require a worker to be certified, designated, or authorized, and may require a competent person and/or a qualified person. In all of these cases employers must ensure workers meet these specific training requirements.

Effective training programs don't just happen. They require careful planning, explicit goals, dedicated instructors, and motivation. How do you get started?

- Analyze tasks to determine what is needed and required
- Design the training program
- Conduct the training
- Evaluate the training's effectiveness
- Improve the training through feedback and available data

A good place to start is identifying workers in high-risk jobs such as those with exposures to heat, noise, falls, chemicals, fire, or mechanical hazards. Remember that work-related accidents may be caused by poor workplace design and/or work processes as well as

inadequate training.

Resources Available

There are many resources available to employers: state and federal websites with the appropriate rules and regulations, AGC safety and loss control consultants, OR-OSHA and DOSH consultative services, manufacturers' representatives, and many others. You don't have to go it alone.

Worker training is essential; the time and money it takes to train or re-train workers is an investment that pays off in fewer workplace accidents and lower insurance premiums. Effective training also helps inexperienced workers, who tend to have higher injury and illness rates than experienced workers. However, training isn't going to help if your workers do not understand it, or if they are unmotivated and have poor work habits.

Finally, no amount of training is likely to reduce workplace risk unless you make it part of your safety and health programs.

If you would like additional information or assistance, please feel free to contact your local AGC safety and loss control consultant. They are available to assist you with training, and provide resource information and materials.