



Cal/OSHA Safety and Your Business

All workplaces are subject to Cal/OSHA safety regulations, which are in place to protect worker safety with regard to machinery and equipment, chemicals, noise, repetitive strain, emergencies, and other dangers.

Cal/OSHA audits can happen at any time. They are usually triggered by complaints from employees or serious injuries in the workplace. However, they can also be conducted randomly.

Here are some tips on how to get up to speed on Cal/OSHA regulations and help keep your workers safe. It could not only save you money on workers' compensation premiums, penalties, and potential litigation fees; it could also help you retain your best and brightest employees.

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING: It is important to maintain a clean and organized workplace. You want to present the proper image especially if you get audited. A dirty or disorderly appearance of your space won't help you in the eyes of an inspector.

ERGONOMICS: Many small businesses are cited for poor ergonomics, which can result in repetitive motion injuries, potential Cal OSHA violations, and lost productivity. Businesses should undergo an ergonomics program evaluation to ensure compliance proper equipment alignment and employee posture.

INJURY & ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM (IIPP): A written IIPP is only required by Cal OSHA for businesses with 10 or more employees. However, it's probably a good idea to have one even if you have fewer than 10 employees.

HAZARD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM: Inadequate hazard communication is one of the most common OSHA citations. A Hazard Communication Program includes a written plan (describing how hazard communication will be implemented), labels (to identify the contents and hazard warnings of containers holding hazardous chemicals), safety data sheets (provided by the distributor or manufacturer of the chemical) and employee training.

SAFETY DATA SHEETS (SDS): You should have a binder of SDS for any hazardous chemical you use. The SDS must be easily accessible to all employees and all employees should be trained on the SDS.

LOCKOUT/TAGOUT: When a machine/piece of equipment being serviced, proper lockout/tagout procedures need to be used. It should be equipped with a lockout device to hold it in the safe position, preventing it from being turned on or energized or releasing stored energy. If that is not possible, it must be tagged to notify employees that they cannot use the device until the tag has been removed.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN: This should be included as a part of your IIPP and includes (among other things) evacuation procedures and escape routes, and any aisle way that leads to an exit must be at least 28" wide.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS: All fire extinguishers must be regularly serviced as they can expire over time. Depending on your lease agreement, it is either your responsibility or the responsibility of the landlord/property owner to ensure fire extinguishers are up to date.

NOISE: A Hearing Conservation Program could be needed if your work facility exposes employees to loud or constant noise.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE): All employees must be provided with and trained to use appropriate PPE (e.g., gloves, safety glasses, respirators, earplugs), which must fit properly and be maintained in good condition. Employees who wear respirators must have a medical clearance—they're healthy enough to wear one—and be fit tested—it has to fit their face correctly.

FORKLIFT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM: It is a potential Cal OSHA violation for anyone to operate a forklift without proper training and certification to do so. For specific training and certification requirements, visit <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/pit/assistance/index.html>.

SAFETY TRAINING: All employees must receive safety training. Be sure to keep a record of all safety training provided.

OSHA 300 LOG: Every company must keep an OSHA 300 log of all workplace injuries beyond first aid. You must also remember to report any injury to OSHA within 8 hours of the incident. Employers with more than 10 worksite employees must maintain a log.

INJURY INVESTIGATIONS: There should be a designated person to investigate accidents and prescribe corrective measures.

RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM: Businesses should have a return-to-work program that includes plans for light or modified duty.

For more information, visit the Cal/OSHA website <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/>

or Federal OSHA website <https://www.osha.gov/employers/index.html>

For suggestions on where to go for professional assistance, visit <http://www.sfmade.org/category/partner/human-resources-insurance/>