

News Release



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Contact: Diana Petterson
Phone: 202-693-1898

U.S. Labor Department's OSHA strengthens integrity of Outreach Training Program

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), in an effort to crack down on fraudulent trainers, is strengthening the integrity of its 36-year-old Outreach Training Program by improving how trainers become authorized to teach and ensuring these trainers are in compliance with OSHA program guidelines.

This voluntary program has grown to a national network of more than 16,000 independent trainers eligible to teach workers and employers about workplace hazards and to provide OSHA 10-hour course completion cards. However, some trainers have fraudulently not provided the appropriate training in accordance with the program.

“The use of independent trainers has allowed OSHA to significantly extend its training capabilities,” said Jordan Barab, acting assistant secretary of labor for OSHA. “But OSHA will not tolerate fraudulent activity or unscrupulous trainers when workers’ health and lives may be at stake.”

Trainers are authorized by completing a one-week OSHA trainer course through an OSHA Training Institute Education Center. The trainers are then eligible to teach 10-hour programs that provide basic information to workers and employers about workplace hazards and OSHA, and 30-hour courses in construction, maritime and general industry safety and health hazards.

The program's success has prompted some states and cities to legislate a requirement that workers complete training to earn an OSHA 10-hour card as a condition of employment. Because this training is becoming a requirement for gaining employment, the program has experienced fraudulent activity.

OSHA has increased unannounced monitoring visits to verify that trainers are in compliance with program requirements. OSHA will continue to refer fraudulent activity to the Labor Department's Office of Inspector General, and trainers caught falsifying information will be subject to criminal prosecution. The public is asked to call a new outreach fraud hotline at 847-297-4810 to file complaints about program fraud and abuse. OSHA also has developed a new process for investigating and adjudicating complaints; and a “watch list” of outreach trainers who have received disciplinary action will be posted on OSHA's public Web site at <http://www.osha.gov>.

OSHA began implementing other changes in 2008. These include requiring trainers to certify their classes and ensuring that training documentation is in accordance with OSHA's guidelines before trainers can receive course completion cards. Tests for outreach training program trainer courses have been revised to ensure more rigorous exams for authorizing new trainers. OSHA is also developing an ethics module to be added to all trainer courses.

“Strengthening the integrity of the Outreach Training Program will help ensure that workers receive quality training, help them gain employment and return them home safely at the end of their workday,” said Barab.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA's role is to assure safe and healthful working conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach and education.

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