



## **OSHA Inspections**

An Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) inspector has just arrived for an inspection. What do you do?

The following are practical steps you can take to prepare yourself and your staff in advance for the inspection. They may also help to reduce fines.

Ask for some extra time to contact key people in your organization. Make sure that the person who is responsible for safety and environmental duties is informed of the inspection. Don't ask for extra time simply to delay an OSHA inspection.

Accompany the OSHA inspector during the inspection. Fix violations immediately during the walk-through. For example, if the inspector finds a frayed power cord, have it replaced immediately. Don't risk a \$1,000 fine by keeping it in service. By demonstrating a "good faith" effort to protect your employees' safety you can reduce fines by as much as 25 percent.

Recognize that you are responsible for employees' work practices. An employee does not have the right to use damaged or dangerous equipment even if it belongs to that person. You are responsible if the employee's equipment does not meet OSHA standards.

Demonstrate a strong effort to comply with OSHA regulations. Show the inspector your written safety and health procedures and provide evidence of employee training in programs required under OSHA standards, such as hazard communication and respiratory protection. Documenting your efforts can reduce fines by as much as 25 percent.

You should have a written procedure for dealing with an OSHA inspection. Determine what managers should do if an OSHA inspector arrives, especially in your absence, and make sure you communicate your policy to them in writing.

Consult an attorney for professional guidance if you contest a penalty or citation.

Source: Paint, Body and Equipment Association Newsletter, Kansas City, MO.