

OSHA:

Occupational Safety and Health Act

Introduction:

As we have transitioned from a predominantly manufacturing economy in the U.S. to a service based one, many of the hazards that once were so prevalent, for instance industrial factories, are less prevalent today. However, there are still many hazards which OSHA addresses to protect the health and safety of employees in the U.S.

One of the major areas of application is retail (i.e., restaurants, shops, hotels, etc.).

Some of the Major Safety and Health Areas Addressed by OSHA:

Chemical and toxic hazards (blood-borne pathogens, radiation, etc.), physical accidents, mis-labeling, hazardous atmosphere or machinery, toxic waste or cargo, hazardous working surfaces or means of access (ladders, ramps stairs etc.), sanitation, electrical standards, emergency exits and procedures, medical and First-Aid standards, hazardous equipment, fire hazards, hazardous general working conditions.

How can a business comply with OSHA?

There are several recommended general steps that the HR department are usually responsible for in order to comply with OSHA. Remember **TCDA—Train, Communicate, Document, Audit**.

1. **Train** all employees in the proper use of equipment, procedures, and use of protective gear and documentation.

2. **Communicate** the required regulations, procedures, use of safety equipment and emergency plans, compliance, accident occurrence to workers in the OSHA designated manner.

Note: Employers with 10 or less employees and certain low risk businesses (see OSHA for more information) do not have to report accidents. Any fatalities must be reported within 8 hours and all workplace related accidents or injuries resulting in hospitalization must be reported within 24 hours.

3. Document all procedures (including evacuation plans etc., training, communications, and compliance.

4. Audit—Do an internal audit to assure compliance.

TCDA—Train, Communicate, Document, Audit, would apply to all departments:

Any time you are working in a business with more than about 10 employees that serves the public, chances are that OSHA applies to you.

You will need to know:

- how to report a slip and fall or other accident at work, and how to report it.
- your rights in terms of training and communications from your employer. The employer must display and communicate certain information to all employees.
- the correct procedures for operating or handling certain equipment, food, fluids, and substances.
- how to document compliance.

After reading about OSHA, test your understanding by answering the questions on the next page.

Self-Challenge

Note your responses on a separate notepad and then access the expert's response on page 4 when you are ready.

Question 1) What should be done first and second in order of importance if your co-worker has an accident on the job in a small business of 50 people and you are the only one there to help? Think about which answers would apply.

- a. Call 911
- b. Call the front desk manager
- c. Call for a doctor
- d. Contact OSHA
- e. Call your boss

See the expert's response on the next page when you are ready.

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Expert's Response: The correct answers in order are “a” then “b.”

- Call 911 if it is serious, they cannot move, they are unconscious, etc.
- Call the manager in charge and let them know what is going on, as they will need to report the accident to OSHA within 24 hours if the person is hospitalized if there are more than 10 employees.

Remember, you want to help the person first, and consider OSHA implications and everything else as secondary. If you got the correct answers, great effort!

Note: Employee accidents should also be posted in the employee breakroom per OSHA regulations.

Consult the U.S. Department of Labor's [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](https://www.osha-slc.gov/)'s (OSHA's) website for more information.