

Mount Holyoke College

OSHA Compliance Programs

OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, establishes national requirements for protection of employee health and safety. Those requirements are described in the federal Code of Federal Regulations, 29 CFR. OSHA covers a number of employer categories including: Construction, Maritime, Agriculture, and General Industry. The College is covered by the General Industry Standard. In Massachusetts, the General Industry Standard applies to all private employers; public employees are covered by State regulation. The General Industry Standard, 29 CFR 1910 is divided into various sections or subparts. The following is a brief description of several of the programs the College has in place to comply with the Standard and protect employee safety and health.

OSHA General Industry Subparts

- C. General Safety and Health
 - D. Walking-Working Surfaces
 - E. Means of Egress
 - F. Powered Platforms, Manlifts etc.
 - G. Occupational Health/
Environmental Control
 - H. Hazardous Materials
 - I. Personal Protective Equipment
 - J. General Environmental Controls
 - K. Medical and First Aid
 - L. Fire Protection
 - M. Compressed Gas and Air
 - N. Material Handling/Storage
 - O. Machinery/Machine Guarding
 - P. Hand/Portable Power Tools
 - Q. Welding/Cutting/Brazing
 - R. Special Industries
 - S. Electrical
 - T. Commercial Diving
 - Z. Toxic and Hazardous Substances
-

Chemical Hazard Communication

Often known as HazCom, the Hazard Communication Program is designed to ensure that employees are aware of the hazards of the chemicals they use. Information on the hazards is available on container labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). The manufacturer of a product must provide an SDS upon purchase. SDS are available on-line through your MHC account. Employees receive training on how to read labels and SDS, and ways to protect themselves from overexposure to chemicals.

Exposure Monitoring

OSHA has established Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) for chemical contaminants in the air. PELs represent air concentrations to which most workers can be exposed with no adverse effect. Employers are responsible for ensuring that employee exposure is below the PEL established for a particular chemical. Exposure monitoring is used to determine if air concentrations exceed the PEL. Air samples are collected over a specified time period, usually 8 hours or 15 minutes, and the results compared to the PEL. If the PEL is exceeded, corrective action to lower exposure is taken. Corrective actions can include: using a different chemical, changing work practices, improving ventilation or wearing a respirator as described below.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and goggles, provide a barrier between chemicals and a person's body and protect against physical hazards (e.g., noise, flying particles, or chain saw blades). The College has an ongoing program to identify PPE requirements.

For chemical exposures, if PELs cannot be achieved by changing work practices or improved ventilation, use of a respirator may be necessary. Respirators filter contaminants from the air. Employees who need to wear a respirator are trained in its proper use and care, receive a medical examination to ensure they can wear it safely, and are fit tested to make sure the respirator fits properly.

Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control

Some employees may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens, microorganisms in blood and other body fluids that can cause human disease, as part of their job. Employees with potential exposure include health care and first aid providers and cleaning staff. These employees receive training on work practices and protective equipment that will protect them from exposure. Employees in this program are also offered the Hepatitis B vaccination.

Laboratory Safety

There are a number of potential hazards in laboratories including chemical, biological and radiation hazard. College policies and procedures, including the Chemical Hygiene Program and the Radiation Safety Program, establish safe work practices, emergency procedures, and waste disposal requirements for instructional and research laboratories.

Fire Safety and Chemical Releases

The College's Fire Safety program is coordinated by the Fire Marshall and includes fire safety infrastructure (e.g., alarms and sprinklers), residential fire safety, and employee fire safety programs required by OSHA.

The College has established procedures for response to chemical releases. For releases defined as emergency responses by OSHA, outside response personnel, fire department or contractors are used. Qualified College employees deal with incidental releases which can be cleaned-up without posing a safety or health hazard.

Lockout/Tagout Energy Control

The maintenance of certain equipment presents a hazard from the unexpected energization of that equipment. Authorized employees are required to lockout or tagout the equipment before working on it to ensure that it

does not start unexpectedly and cause injury. Lockout means that a lock is applied that prevents the equipment from being started; tagout is used when using a lock is not feasible and involves attaching a tag to the device warning that it should not be activated. Specific procedures are required for removal of locks or tags.

Confined Space Entry

Confined spaces are areas that are difficult to get into or out of and have limited ventilation. They pose a hazard from the possible buildup of air contaminants that may be toxic or result in low oxygen levels. Before entering confined spaces employees must use a gas monitor to measure oxygen level and certain contaminant levels. If certain levels are exceeded or other hazards exist, special precautions must be taken and a confined space permit is required. Only trained and authorized employees are allowed to enter confined spaces.

Ergonomics

Ergonomics is the consideration of human factors in the designs of workstations, work tasks, tools, and equipment. Good workplace ergonomics can prevent injuries and increase productivity. The College's program includes employee training, job and workplace assessments and provides necessary equipment to improve ergonomics in the workplace.

Questions?

If you have any questions regarding OSHA programs or other safety concerns, please talk to your supervisor or call the Director of Environmental Health, Safety & Sustainability at ext. 2529.
