



Cal/OSHA Consultation Service

A Nonenforcement Safety and Health Resource for Construction Employers

by Chris Lee, WACA Safety Consultant

When many employers hear a reference to Cal/OSHA, they instinctively think of enforcement officers conducting inspections, issuing citations and levying monetary penalties. However, there is some good news for employers seeking professional safety and health assistance who want to voluntarily comply with regulations — Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Both federal OSHA and Cal/OSHA have programs to promote voluntary compliance as well as employer/employee education and training to identify and correct hazards on the job site. This is a particularly good option for employers who do not have either a full-time or contract safety professional on staff.

Mission of Consultation Services

The mission of Cal/OSHA Consultation Services is to help eliminate worker injuries and illnesses by providing effective workplace safety and health assistance to California's employers and employees. Its objectives are:

- Identify hazards and promote safety and health to small, high-hazard employers
- Educate employers and employees about the benefits of safety and health
- Encourage employers and employees to maintain good safety and health practices

Types of Assistance

On-site visits are available but provided only at the employer's request. A critical part of an on-site consultation is evaluating and suggesting improvements in workplace safety and health programs, which are summarized in a written report.

Off-site consultation can be provided to employers and employees away from the work site via telephone, email or office meetings.

Educational materials are also available. Consultation Services provides educational materials, including eTools to help reduce/eliminate workplace injuries and illnesses. Publications are available for download at www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/PubOrder.asp. The eTools can be obtained at www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/etools.

The partnership programs administered by Cal/OSHA — where industry, labor and Cal/OSHA work together — recognize workplace safety and health programs that effectively prevent injuries and illnesses.

Outreach assistance is available in the form of Cal/OSHA conducting and participating in workplace safety and health seminars, conferences, workshops and other events with employers and employees. These events focus on high-hazard industries, processes and job categories.



Consultation Background and Confidentiality

Consultants are knowledgeable safety and industrial hygiene professionals — many have certifications in their field. Every consultation is confidential and free.

An important fact to note is that Cal/OSHA Consultation Services is separate from enforcement. No information from employers is shared with enforcement.

Potential Benefits of Engaging the Consultation Service

- Reduction in preventable accidents and injuries
- Reduced workers' compensation premiums
- Decreased employee absence and turnover rates
- Stronger workplace safety culture
- Possibility for an abatement period (if hazards are found), not a citation and penalty

For more information or to schedule a visit, contact Cal/OSHA Consultation Services toll-free at (800) 963-9424 or by email at InfoCons@dir.ca.gov.