

WHAT IS THE CONSULTATION PROGRAM?



The Consultation Program is a broad network of occupational safety and health services funded primarily by federal OSHA but delivered by the 50 state governments, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. The states offer the expertise of highly qualified occupational safety and health professionals to employers who request help in establishing and maintaining a safe and healthful workplace.

The Consultation Program exists to help you, the employer. Consultation assistance can be comprehensive, going well beyond the minimal requirements of OSHA regulations. Consultants can evaluate your workplace's mechanical systems, physical work practices, and environmental hazards. They will assess your present safety and health management system, or if you do not have one, will assist you in developing an effective one. Consultants not only conduct any or all these services, but also deliver any isolated service component, such as reviewing a machine for guarding, if that is all you want.

Key Services

Consultation offers you an array of services.

Consultants can:

- Help you recognize hazards in your workplace.
- Suggest approaches or options for solving a safety or health problem.
- Identify sources of help available to you if you need further assistance.
- Provide you with a written report that summarizes the findings.
- Assist you in developing or maintaining an effective safety and health program.
- Offer training and education for you and your employees at your workplace and, in some cases, away from your worksite.
- Recommend you for recognition by OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).

Designed for Smaller Businesses

Consultation is designed specifically for small- and medium-size businesses — 250 employees at a single site or 500 corporatewide. Consultation gives priority assistance to employers in high-hazard industries or involved in hazardous operations.

If you are a small employer, you may sometimes find it difficult to identify your worksite's hazards and to apply federal and state safety and health standards effectively. Moreover, you may lack the resources to hire outside private consultants to help you meet your obligations under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970* and state workplace safety and health laws. For these reasons, you, as a small employer, receive priority for consultation services.

It's Free!

The price is right! The Consultation Program is free of charge to eligible employers who request it.

Federal OSHA, in partnership with the states, designed and funded the Consultation Program to provide expert advice to small businesses that want help in establishing a safe and healthful workplace. You, the employer, pay absolutely nothing.

No Citations, No Penalties

The Consultation Program is completely separate from OSHA enforcement operations. A consultant will visit your worksite at your request to provide the assistance you have requested. The consultant does not issue citations or impose penalties for violations of federal or state OSHA statutes that he or she may find during the consultation visit. Although a consultant cannot guarantee that your workplace will pass a federal or state inspection, it has been demonstrated that a consultation visit will significantly reduce the citation or penalty impact of future inspections.

Confidential

Consultation is a confidential service. The consultant will not provide the name of your company, its owner(s), or any information about your workplace to OSHA enforcement staff, so long as you, the employer, agree to correct any serious hazards discovered during a Consultation visit. Be assured, your request for consultation service will not trigger a federal or state OSHA inspection. Only where an employer refuses or fails to control or eliminate a “serious hazard” or to remove employees from an “imminent danger” within agreed upon timeframes will the Consultation Project Manager notify OSHA enforcement. Such instances are rare.



Types of Consultation Visits

The Consultation Program offers comprehensive and specific services in all states.

OSHA encourages you to request a complete hazard identification survey when you request a consultation. This type of consultation visit covers all your worksite operations and conditions, and emphasizes illness and injury prevention for your employees. The consultant will provide assistance in establishing an effective workplace safety and health management system. Assistance may also include training and education services for you, your supervisors, and other employees.

Also, a limited consultation visit is available. Limited visits focus on specific problems.