

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAINING GUIDELINES FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

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FOREWARD

The Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (FACOSH) has determined there is a lack of consistency across the federal agencies for safety and health training at all staff levels. In response to this finding, FACOSH approved a recommendation June 7, 2011 that the Secretary of Labor (the Secretary) convene a cross-cutting government task force, chaired by OSHA and in consultation with and assistance from NIOSH, to focus on developing safety and health training guidelines that would achieve consistency across the federal government for training requirements contained in 29 CFR Part 1960 at all staff levels. The Secretary approved this recommendation and, subsequently, under the direction of the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, a government task force was convened to develop the training guidelines and recommendations. The following training guidelines, generic training SOP, and specific recommendations for FACOSH are the product of that task force's effort.

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Introduction

The following training guidelines apply to the training requirements found in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health (FEOSH) standard at 29 CFR Part 1960. This guideline is intended to define FEOSH training requirements, establish a baseline as to training content, and provide guidance as to common elements. It is intended that the impact of this effort will be the establishment of a consistent, standardized safety and health training of federal employees across the executive branch.

Presently, there is wide variation in the manner and detail of FEOSH training across the Executive Branch. This variation may result in inadequate training for some employees and/or training on the wrong topics or issues for other employees. In addition, the lack of standardization results in an economic impact where inadequate training has to be repeated or supplemented.

The guidelines will provide federal agencies with a list of the various training provisions contained in the OSHA FEOSH standard and guidance on content, frequency/duration, documentation/assurance, trainer qualifications, and training methods.

I. Scope of Training

The OSHA FEOSH standard establishes the scope of training needs for six (6) different employee categories or groups. Specifically, the standard addresses safety and health training for:

1. Management officials, 1960.54,
2. Supervisory employees, 1960.55,
3. Safety and health specialists, 1960.56,
4. Safety and health inspectors, 1960.57,
5. Collateral duty employees & safety and health committee members, 1960.58,
6. Employees & employee representatives, 1960.59.

II. Content of Training

The FEOSH training requirements establish some specific training elements, which are common to each of the six employee categories or groups, and some training elements, which are unique to a specific employee category or group. In addition, while some of the training elements are specifications of a particular topic; other elements use performance language to describe the type or extent of training desired.

Common Elements

Each of the six major groups or categories of employees addressed in 29 CFR 1960 are required to be trained on four (4) common elements. Accordingly, FEOSH training for all employees must include the following four items:

1. Section 19 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act);
2. Presidential Executive Order (E.O.) 12196;
3. 29 CFR Part 1960, (OSHA FEOSH Standard);
4. The specific Agency Safety & Health program.

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In developing training for these four common categories, the objective should be that employees gain an understanding of the general principles or concepts presented in these documents. The point of the training should be to provide employees with a common understanding of the framework, which supports their safety and health program (items 1-3, above), and then train them on the general aspects of their agency's safety and health program.

Unique Specifications

In addition to training, which is common to all employee groups referenced in the standard, some training is unique to specific employee categories listed in the FEOSH standard. For example, supervisory employees are to have training on "*motivation of subordinates*," safety and health specialists are to have training on "*analysis of accident, injury and illness data*," and safety and health inspectors are to have training on "*preparation of reports and findings*." In most of these instances, such training is mandated by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) as part of the Position Classification Standards for those particular positions.

As an example, the OPM Job Family Position Classification Standard for Safety and Health Inspectors, Group 1800, and for Safety and Occupational Health Manager series, Group 0018, establishes that the "*knowledge required for the position*," must include the ability to, "*prepare reports and technical information*." Therefore, the only supplemental training that would be imposed by OSHA's FEOSH standard for employees employed as safety and health inspectors would be agency-specific training on the use of the agency's unique reporting system and/or training on the agency's procedures for filing and managing such reports. Similarly, OPM's General Schedule Supervisory Guide for determining the managerial and/or supervisory responsibilities of a federal position states under "Nature of Contacts," that supervisors must have skills in "*organizational relationships, authority and/or influence*" of subordinates and under "Purpose of Contacts" it states supervisors must be able to "*influence, motivate, or persuade persons or groups to accept opinions or take actions*." Accordingly, the OSHA FEOSH requirement that supervisory employees are to have training on "*motivation of subordinates*" is met in that personnel are to have this motivational skill and ability in order to initially qualify for a supervisory position under OPM requirements.

The OSHA FEOSH standard does describe some training elements using performance language, which is intended to describe the type or extent of training desired. For example, under the standard section on "*employees and employee representatives*," (1960.59), the standard requires training "*appropriate to the work performed*." Here OSHA has used performance language rather than specifications to direct agencies to provide what is termed today as "*job specific training*." The intent is to have agencies train to unique conditions found in a particular position or at a particular worksite.

Appendix A to this guideline provides a table with required training listed by each of the six (6) major employee categories.

Baseline of Training Content

To establish a baseline of consistent safety and health training content for FEOSH training across the federal government, it is appropriate to begin with the four "common" elements, which are applicable to each of the employee groups or categories. Next, this guideline will consider for inclusion in this baseline, those elements which are found in at least two or more of the employee groups described by the standard. Where similar training requirements are found in two or more employee groups and where that training is not a technical specification directly related to a specific position, this guideline considers it for inclusion in the baseline training items.

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Using this approach to compile a baseline listing of the training that the OSHA standard requires for federal employees, nine (9) distinct subject areas can be identified. Those areas are:

Baseline Elements for FEOSH Training

1. Section 19 of Public Law 91-596 (the OSH Act);
2. Presidential Executive Order 12196, (E.O. 12196);
3. 29 CFR 1960, Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs and roles and responsibilities;
4. General awareness/orientation;
5. Individual agency's safety & health (S&H) program;
6. How to identify applicable S&H standards;
7. Procedures for reporting, evaluating & abating hazards;
8. Procedures for reporting & investigating allegations of reprisal;
9. Evaluation and abatement of hazards.

This list comprises the baseline of training topics/subjects, which each federal agency should use in training federal employees. Each agency should use this baseline of training elements in developing and providing fundamental safety and health training for federal employees. Ensuring that the initial safety and health training covers these fundamental baseline elements leave only a few subject areas unique to specific employee categories to be addressed. Accordingly, this 'baseline' ensures that consistency in fundamental safety and health training is established across the Executive Branch.

Appendix B to this guideline provides a table identifying those training elements which OSHA would issue as guidance on FEOSH training content.

This approach does not address some training which is unique to certain job categories, however, that training must be addressed by individual agencies based on specified job assignments and duties. For example, the training of supervisory employees on "*supervisory responsibilities*" and on "*motivation of subordinates*," must build on the OPM Position Classification Standards for those positions and incorporate agency-specific policy and procedures. Similarly, employees in the category of safety and health specialists are to have training on "*analysis of accident, injury and illness data*" and that training must be agency-specific incorporating agency policy, systems and procedures. Lastly, the general performance language used to describe training for employees and employee representatives also must be a decision unique to individual agencies and to the assignment and duties of the employees.

Appendix C to this guideline provides a table with the unique or special training requirements listed by each of the six (6) major employee categories.

III. Frequency & Duration of Training

OSHA's FEOSH standard refers to the required training as an "*orientation*" and it makes no specific reference to repeating the training on a periodic basis. Strictly defined, this training would be a one-time introduction or general guide about this activity. While there is no reference in the OSHA FEOSH standard as to the frequency or duration of required training or to the need for repeat or follow-up instruction, there may be some latitude in one of the six job categories addressed under the standard. In the section addressing the training of "*safety and health specialist*" at 1960.56(b) for example, OSHA states that, "*Each agency shall implement career development programs for their occupational safety and health specialists to enable the staff to meet present and future program needs of the agency.*" In addition, this section addresses training as "*courses, laboratory experiences, field study, and other*

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formal learning experiences.” This implies that FEOSH training should include laboratory or “hands-on” training, peer teaching and interactive learning activities.

As an example of how to address questions of training frequency, some federal agencies require all new employees to complete an orientation or basic FEOSH course, which meets the OSHA FEOSH requirements on the training elements common to all employee groups. At these agencies, the orientation or basic FEOSH course resides in an on-line system and it is available at all times for the use of employees. This initial or orientation training is then coupled with agency-wide annual safety and health training for all employees and any specific training, which is necessary based on an employee’s position, duties and exposures. The annual agency-wide training is newly developed each year covering a series of safety and health topics of current importance such as, distracted driving, ergonomics, etc. Each year’s announcement to employees of the new annual training includes a reminder of the “on-demand” availability of the basic orientation training for those wishing a refresher. This approach offers an effective means of complying with OSHA requirements, and it is efficient with regard to training budgets as well as employee time dedicated to training activities. Importantly, this example ensures that safety and health training for Federal employees is a continuing learning process building on OSHA requirements rather than a one-time event or static “refresher” requirement to be fulfilled each year without provision for new or enhanced topics. This approach also allows for training related to new or emerging hazards and issues of importance to a given agency or job task/function.

All new employees must complete an orientation or basic FEOSH course, which meets the OSHA issued guidance on training requirements. This orientation or basic FEOSH course resides in an on-line system and it remains available at all times for the use of employees. In subsequent years after having completed the orientation FEOSH course, all employees are required to take an agency-wide annual safety and health training course. This annual safety and health training may be specific training, which is necessary based on an employee’s position, duties and exposures; or it may be an annual agency-wide training which is newly developed each year covering a series of safety and health topics of current importance such as distracted driving, ergonomics, etc. In addition, each year’s announcement to employees of the need to complete some form of annual safety and health training would include a reminder of the “on-demand” availability of the basic orientation training for those wishing a refresher on the standard FEOSH topics.

Appendix D to this guideline provides a table of the frequency of baseline FEOSH training by relating initial and annual safety and health training courses.

IV. Documentation & Assurance of Training

Certain standards require evidence of a formal training plan or training materials, or both, as well as written documents certifying successful completion of required training. As an example, the standard for process safety management of highly hazardous chemicals requires employers to make sure each worker *"has received and understood"* the required training. In addition to this requirement for documentation, employers also must keep a record of *"the means used to verify that the employee understood the training,"* which is a method of assurance. The language in OSHA’s FEOSH standard; however, is less specific about either the need for a formalized program or records of employee participation or achievement. In OSHA’s FEOSH standard under some of the job categories, we find that the training of employees should be, *"commensurate with the scope of their assigned responsibilities."* Further, OSHA states that agencies must *"implement career development programs"* for safety and health specialists, and they must *"include both introductory and specialized courses"* in the training of employees who are representatives of employee groups. To adequately implement either of these two requirements, it is necessary some method of documentation must be in place. An interpretation that

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required training provisions within OSHA's FEOSH standard require agency's to document the training is a reasonable conclusion. Accordingly, this guideline requires the documentation of the required training provisions.

While an interpretation of the statements found in OSHA's FEOSH standard may be used to justify documentation of training, there also are statements in the paragraphs on training, which describe the activities or performance that is expected as a result of the training. These activities that the various employee groups must be able to demonstrate proficiency in following instruction is a form of assurance. For example, supervisors must have training such that they are able to "*recognize and eliminate, or reduce, occupational safety and health hazards in their working units.*" Supervisors also are expected to be trained to *report hazards, investigate allegations of reprisal, and know agency procedures for the abatement of hazards.* Establishing a method or means of assuring that employees understand the training, which they receive is an acknowledgement of these responsibilities and a demonstration of accountability and "good faith" in complying with the Executive Order, the federal law and the OSHA standards. In this regard, Assistant Secretary Michaels April 28, 2010 memorandum to OSHA regional administrators, "OSHA Training Standards Policy Statement," makes it quite clear that an employer "must instruct its employees using both a language and vocabulary the employees can understand."

Documentation of employee training to meet the provisions of OSHA's FEOSH standard need not be separate from other employee training records; however, it must be recorded in such a form as to be easily retrievable and clearly identifiable as meeting the requirements of 29 CFR Part 1960.

Likewise, there should be assurance employees have not only taken the training, but that they have "*understood*" the training. Typically, the first step is to define the learning objectives for the training. A learning objective should specify the criteria used to determine whether particular knowledge, skill, or ability has been attained. The criteria should include the conditions under which the trainee is evaluated and the standard of performance, which is acceptable for the learning objective. The conditions of achievement of the learning objective(s) may, for example, be successful completing of a question on a quiz within the training or at the completion of training, and/or meeting a standard of performance under a simulated or an actual work condition. Passing a quiz or demonstrating a particular skill, based on specified learning objectives, also may be an effective way of determining whether training is actually required.

Assurance of the effectiveness of training is also enhanced by obtaining the perspectives of the trainee, the trainer, the workplace, and/or the organization. These may be documented on forms developed by the agency.

V. Methods of Delivering Training

With few exceptions, current OSHA standards do not dictate methods to be used in delivering the required training. One standard on powered platform operations (29 CFR 1910.66) mentions pictorial methods can be used instead of written work procedures in the training activity. Several others stipulate a portion of the training time to be a "*hands-on*" or laboratory type learning experience. More generally, however, the "how to" of training is left to the discretion of the agency.

Here the agencies should be given the latitude to implement the most effective and efficient approach to training employees. Some agencies may elect to have several different methods of delivering the necessary training. However, the selection of a method should include a plan and system for self-assessing the effectiveness of the method. This would ensure that a method, which is not effective, will be quickly altered or changed. Assurance of the effectiveness of training methods also may be enhanced

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by obtaining the perspectives of the trainee, the trainer, the workplace, and/or the organization. These perspectives also may be documented on forms developed by the agency. The method of delivering the training is very important. Ineffective methods often result in employees not having sufficient knowledge, skills, or abilities to protect themselves. Ineffective methods may also contribute to developing cultures, which do not value truly addressing health and safety issues. Because agency leadership has the responsibility for determining the best and most efficient use of resources, they should be responsible for determining the most effective and efficient methods to be used in delivering the required training. Management's review of perspectives of the trainee, the trainer, the workplace, and/or organization officials may provide needed insights and result in appropriate metrics associated with program validation. However, in any case there must be an accountability aspect accompanying this responsibility if consistency in training is to be achieved. One method of accountability would be for a portion of the OSHA required annual FEOSH reporting to include specific information/data on agency metrics used in gauging the effectiveness of such training.

VI. Communications Plan

Any effort to establish consistency of federal agency safety and health training across the federal agencies will require OSHA to develop and issue guidance as to the general content and frequency of such training. This guidance must then be clearly communicated to all federal agencies along with any other expectations.

Recommendations for communicating federal employee safety and health training guidance to the federal agencies include:

1. Requiring agencies to report on the consistency of their federal employee safety and health training efforts in the required annual FEOSH reports. The OSH Act, E.O. 12196, and 29 CFR 1960.71 all have requirements for federal agency heads to submit to the Secretary of Labor an annual report on their agency's occupational safety and health program. OSHA can add to their existing reporting template, requests for information about agency training, metrics for the training, frequency of training, and others. This option would ensure agency heads see this issue as a "reportable" item and it would improve the likelihood that such training would continue to be funded.
2. Letter/Memo to DASHOs – Every federal agency is required to appoint a "Designated Agency Safety and Health Official" (DASHO) as required by section 1.2 of E.O. 12196 and by 29 CFR 1960.6. The Secretary of Labor (or the Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA) may elect to send a letter to agency DASHOs informing them of the issuance of guidelines for federal employee safety and health training and asking for their cooperation in ensuring consistency.
3. Letter to Agency Heads - The Secretary of Labor (or the Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA) may jointly or in coordination with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management send a letter to agency heads informing them of the issuance of guidelines for federal employee safety and health training and ask for their cooperation in ensuring consistency.
4. Letter to OPM - The Secretary of Labor (or the Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA) may send a letter to the director of OPM requesting they use their communication avenues to notify agency heads, agency Human Resources departments, and Employee Assistance Programs of the establishment of a baseline for the training requirements in the current FEOSH standard and ask for their cooperation in ensuring consistency.

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VII. Oversight of Training

OSHA should develop an oversight or verification process for FEOSH training. The primary objective in establishing such an oversight process would be to ensure the required training is consistently provided to every federal employee. Such a process should improve training quality and portability across agencies. Such an oversight program may be as fundamental as requesting that each agency DASHO review and “verify” their agency’s FEOSH training met the OSHA guidance. OSHA could then use a random selection process to conduct on-site spot-checks of a small sample of agencies as a means of verifying conformance and consistency.

VIII. Resources

[ANSI/ASSE Z490.1-2009, Criteria for Accepted Practices in Safety, Health, and Environmental Training](#)

This standard establishes criteria for training administration and management, development, delivery, evaluation, and documentation and recordkeeping. It also provides useful guidelines.

<https://www.asse.org/cartpage.php?link=standards>

[Designing and Delivering Effective Training](#); Susan M. McMaster, CIT; NESHTA 2004

Provides principles for designing, delivering and evaluating workplace training, to include guidance in instructional strategies, media selection, delivery and testing techniques, and program validation

https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/shopping/shopping.aspx?site=neshta&webcode=shopping&prd_key=8730caa1-50d4-4272-acf1-be502a5331d3

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OSHA REQUIRED TRAINING LISTED BY EMPLOYEE CATEGORY OR GROUP¹

EMPLOYEE GROUP OR CATEGORY	REQUIRED TRAINING
“top management officials” - 1960.54	<p>Four (4) basic items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sec. 19 of the OSH Act, 2. E.O. 12196, 3. 29 CFR Part 1960, and 4. Their Agency’s Safety & Health program.
“supervisory employees” - 1960.55	<p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “supervisory employees” must receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisory responsibility for safety & health • Applicable S&H standards • Procedures for reporting hazards • Procedures for investigating allegations of reprisal • Procedures for hazard abatement. • Training on motivation of subordinates.
“safety and health specialists” - 1960.56	<p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “safety and health specialists” must receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical monitoring, testing, sampling, testing, design, etc. • Hazard recognition, evaluation and control • Equipment and facility design • Analysis of accident, injury and illness data • Career development plan/program
“safety and health inspectors” - 1960.57	<p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “safety and health inspectors” must receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation of reports and findings
“collateral duty safety and health personnel and committee members” - 1960.58	<p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “collateral duty safety & health personnel” must receive training on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for reporting, evaluating and abating hazards; • Procedures for investigating allegations of reprisal; • Hazard recognition; and • Identification and use of S&H standards.
“employees and employee representatives” – 1960.59	<p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “employees” must receive training which is: “appropriate to the work performed.”</p> <p>In addition to the 4 basic items¹ “employee representatives” must receive “specialized training” in hazard recognition and in workplace inspections.</p>

¹ Each of the six major groups of employees addressed in 29 CFR 1960 are required to be trained on 1) Sec. 19 of the OSH Act, 2) E.O. 12196, 3) 29 CFR Part 1960, and 4) their Agency’s Safety & Health program.

Note: Training items which are similar are highlighted with similar colors to identify them.

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– Appendix B –

CONTENT OF TRAINING BASELINE OF FEOSH TRAINING ELEMENTS¹

(Proposed OSHA guidance - *Agencies are responsible for initial/baseline training of each of these elements*)

BASELINE TRAINING ELEMENTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Section 19 of Public Law 91-596 (the OSH Act);2. Presidential Executive Order 12196, (E.O. 12196);3. 29 CFR 1960, Elements for Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Programs;4. General awareness/orientation5. Individual agency's safety & health (S&H) program;6. How to identify applicable S&H standards;7. Procedures for reporting, evaluating & abating hazards;8. Procedures for reporting & investigating allegations of reprisal;9. Evaluation and abatement of hazards.

¹ As required by OSHA's FEOSH standard, 29 CFR Part 1960.

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CONTENT OF TRAINING TRAINING NOT COVERED BY THE BASELINE OF FEOSH TRAINING ELEMENTS¹

(Proposed OSHA guidance – Agencies are responsible for the content, deliver, etc. of each of the following elements.)

EMPLOYEE GROUP OR CATEGORY	SPECIAL TRAINING
“top management officials” - 1960.54	The training required by OSHA’s FEOSH standard is covered by using the baseline training elements for content of FEOSH training.
“supervisory employees” - 1960.55	<p>The following training requirements are <u>not</u> covered by the baseline of FEOSH training elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Supervisory responsibility for safety & health</u>: Agencies will have to provide additional agency-specific training on supervisory responsibilities for safety & health. • <u>Training on motivation of subordinates</u>. OPM Position Classification Standards for “supervisory” positions require employees in supervisory positions to have some ability/skill in motivation of subordinates; agencies will need to supplement their agency-specific training with appropriate safety & health tng.
“safety and health specialists” - 1960.56	<p>The following training requirements are <u>not</u> covered by the baseline of FEOSH training elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Technical monitoring, testing, sampling, testing, design, etc.</u>; OPM Position Classification Standards for “safety & health specialist” positions require ability/skill in this area to qualify for the position. Agencies will have to provide additional training and update or refresher training in this area. • <u>Equipment and facility design</u>; Agencies will have to provide agency-specific & facility-specific training in this area. • <u>Analysis of accident, injury and illness data</u>; OPM Position Classification Std.’s require these skills/abilities to qualify for this position. Agencies will have to provide additional training and agency-specific training in this area. • <u>Career development plan/program</u>. Agencies will have to develop such plans based on employee assignments and tasks, and provide additional training as appropriate.
“safety and health inspectors” - 1960.57	<p>The following training requirements are <u>not</u> covered by the baseline of FEOSH training elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Preparation of reports and findings</u>. OPM Position Classification Std.’s require these skills/abilities to qualify for safety and health inspector positions. Agencies will have to provide additional training especially on agency-specific procedures and protocols. As agency directives and requirements change, retraining will be necessary.

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EMPLOYEE GROUP OR CATEGORY	SPECIAL TRAINING
“collateral duty safety and health personnel and committee members” - 1960.58	The training required by OSHA’s FEOSH standard is covered by using the baseline training elements for content of FEOSH training. Additional training and updates or refresher training may be added by individual agencies to ensure employees know and understand agency safety and health procedures and programs.
“employees and employee representatives” – 1960.59	<p>The following training requirements are <u>not</u> covered by the baseline of FEOSH training elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For “<i>employees</i>” training is to be: “<u><i>appropriate to the work performed.</i></u>” which will include training beyond the baseline elements. Additional training should be based on an evaluation of employee assignments and potential exposure to hazards. • “<i>Employee representatives</i>” must receive “<u><i>specialized training</i></u>” in hazard recognition and in workplace inspections, which is beyond that listed in the baseline elements.

¹ As required by OSHA’s FEOSH standard, 29 CFR Part 1960.

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– Appendix D –

FREQUENCY OF TRAINING

Employee Group or Category	Frequency of Training
All new employees – either those new to federal employment or those transferring from another federal agency.	<p><u>Annual</u> safety and health training to consist of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An initial safety and health training course covering of the baseline FEOSH elements and provided within the first two weeks of employment; and <u>thereafter followed by</u>2. Annual safety and health training courses which build on the elements of the initial course and focus on current safety issues, tasks and/or assignments.