

Training

How to Meet OSHA Training Standards During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Earlier this year, OSHA issued an Enforcement Memo “Discretion in Enforcement when Considering an Employer’s Good Faith Efforts During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic,” outlining special provisions and exceptions to meeting OSHA Standards for training requirements based on the mitigations put in place in workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What Are The Challenges to Meeting OSHA Standards During the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Mitigation protocols including business closures, travel restrictions, limits on the number of people in group gatherings, no-visitor policies, and other stay-at-home requirements have impacted companies around the world. Without the regular, day-to-day business operations in place, OSHA has recognized the challenges in continuing training, auditing, equipment inspections, testing, and other essential safety and industrial hygiene services.

What Changes Has OSHA Implemented?

Recognizing these challenges, OSHA has announced that Compliance Safety and Health Officers (CSHOs) should “evaluate whether the employer made good faith efforts to comply with applicable OSHA standards during the course of an inspection. When considering whether or not an employer engaged in “good faith” compliance efforts, CSHOs should also “evaluate whether the employer thoroughly explored all options to comply with the applicable standard(s) (e.g., the use of virtual training or remote communication strategies).”

If an employer cannot demonstrate any efforts to comply with standards, a citation may be issued; however, in cases where an employer has made attempts to comply in “good faith,” Area Offices “shall take such efforts into strong consideration in determining whether to cite a violation.”

What Options Are Considered “Good Faith” To Meet OSHA Standards?

As outlined in the OSHA memo, the use of virtual training or remote communication strategies are examples of options to show “good faith” in efforts to meet standards during these unprecedented times.

As one solution, MSA Safety offers Virtual Led Training (VLT) courses for a variety of subjects including Confined Space and Fall Protection, Competent User Level for Portable and Permanent Instruments, and RITE, FIRST, and CARE certification and recertification. VLT courses are conducted via the WebEx video conferencing platform with an MSA Training Instructor in the same manner as the current in-person training, and follow the same class format and content that would happen on-site.

Learn more about VLT and register for courses [here](#).

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