

# TOP 10

## MOST CITED OSHA VIOLATIONS

### In This Guide

This guide looks deeper into OSHA's annual "Top 10" list to highlight specific health & safety regulations that employers struggle with every year.

### 2025 Update



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## Machine Guarding (General Industry)

OSHA's Machinery and Machine Guarding Standard [29 CFR Part 1910, Subpart O] requires employers to identify machinery that could cause injury to any employee.

Guards must be installed to prevent employees from having any part of their body in the danger zone of the machinery.

Machine-related injuries can occur at the point of operation, as a result of contact with rotating or moving parts or from flying chips or sparks.

Injuries from unguarded or improperly guarded machinery can be fatal and cause amputations, permanent disability, lacerations, crushing injuries, and abrasions.

**18,000**

Number of workers injured while operating or maintaining machinery in the US every year.

Source: [OSHA](#)





# 9

## PPE: Eye and Face Protection (Construction Industry)

Failure to ensure that employees use eye and face protection is one of the construction industry violations most frequently cited by OSHA inspectors.

Eye and face protection that is selected for employee use must comply with a consensus standard listed in the regulations and must meet minimum requirements for protection, comfort, fit, durability, and more.

[29 CFR 1926.102(a)(5) and (b)]

### 29 CFR 1926.102(a)(1)

The employer shall ensure that each affected employee uses appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards from:

- Flying particles
- Molten metal
- Liquid chemicals
- Acids or caustic liquids
- Chemical gases or vapors
- Potentially injurious light radiation





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## Powered Industrial Trucks (General Industry)

Failure to properly train, certify, and re-certify operators are among the most common reasons that OSHA cites employers for noncompliance with the Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) Standard [29 CFR 1910.178].

Training for forklift operators must include formal instruction (e.g., lecture, online training, video) as well as practical training and an evaluation of the operator's performance [29 CFR 1910.178(l)(2)].

While the common term "forklift" is often used to describe this OSHA standard, these regulations apply to ALL powered industrial trucks—a broader term that also covers powered pallet jacks/hand trucks, order pickers, tractors, lift trucks, and more.

**7,000**

The approx. number of forklift-related injuries in the US that require days away from work each year.

**18 days**

The median amount of time missed following a forklift-related injury.

Source: [National Safety Council](#)





# 7

## Scaffolding (Constructon Industry)

Lack of employee training is a common misstep for construction industry employers, including many employers in the scaffolding business.

Each employee who works on a scaffold **must be trained** by a qualified person to recognize the hazards associated with the type of scaffold being used.

[29 CFR 1926.454(a)]

### 29 CFR 1926.454(a)(1)–(5)

Required training elements include:

- Fall hazards
- Electrical hazards
- Falling object hazards
- Proper use of the scaffold
- Proper handling of materials on the scaffold
- The scaffold's maximum intended load & capacity
- Any other “pertinent requirements” in Part 1926.454





# 6

## Fall Protection—Training Requirements (Construction Industry)

Falls are the leading cause of injury and fatalities in the construction industry. In addition to the rules for equipping workers with adequate fall protection, OSHA requires employers to provide training for employees who might be exposed to fall hazards. Re-training is required when necessary.

Employers must also create a training certification record that contains all required information listed by OSHA in 29 CFR 1926.503(b)(1).

### 29 CFR 1926.503(a)(1)

“The employer shall provide a training program for each employee who might be exposed to fall hazards.

The program shall enable each employee to recognize the hazards of falling and shall train each employee in the procedures to be followed in order to minimize these hazards.”





# 5

## Respiratory Protection (General Industry)

Millions of workers in the US rely on respirators to filter out harmful particulates, gases, paint vapors, chemicals, and more from the air they breathe.

In workplaces where respirator use is a necessity, employers must establish and maintain a written respiratory protection program that includes procedures for selecting respirators, medical evaluations and fit testing, training of employees, and much more.

### [29 CFR 1910.134(c)(1)]

Before an employee can wear a respirator in the workplace, the employer must perform a medical evaluation and fit testing [1910.134(e)(1) and (f)(1)]. These steps will ensure that the employee can safely wear the chosen respirator and that it will both fit and function properly during use.

“Compliance with the Respiratory Protection Standard could avert hundreds of deaths and thousands of illnesses annually.”

Source: [OSHA](#)





## 4

### Lockout/Tagout (General Industry)

OSHA created the Lockout/Tagout or “Control of Hazardous Energy” Standard [29 CFR 1910.147] to protect employees from injury due to the unexpected startup of machinery or release of stored energy.

Workers are especially vulnerable to injury when they reach inside machinery or equipment to perform servicing or maintenance.

“Lockout” refers to devices that prevent machinery or equipment from becoming energized, while “tagout” refers to devices that warn other employees not to energize the machinery while it is being maintained or serviced.

One of many examples of “hazardous energy” in general industry workplaces is a jammed conveyor suddenly releasing and causing a crushing injury.

**50,000**

The number of injuries that OSHA has said are prevented by compliance with lockout/tagout requirements every year.

Source: [OSHA Fact Sheet](#)





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## Ladders (Construction Industry)

Broken or poorly maintained ladders at construction sites are a frequent cause of citations under the Ladders Standard [29 CFR 1926.1053]. However, OSHA requirements for ladder safety go far beyond some minor dents or missing rungs.

Among the rules for ladders in the construction industry are requirements for how to place and ascend ladders, minimum load capacity, distance between ladder rungs, and use of cages and wells.

While it's the construction industry Ladder Standard that makes the "Top 10" list every year, OSHA enforces requirements for ladders used in general industry workplaces as well.

The regulations for ladders in general industry are equally detailed and can be found in **29 CFR 1910.23**.

"Falls from portable ladders are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries."

Source: [OSHA Portable Ladder Safety QuickCard](#)



## 2

# Hazard Communication (General Industry)

OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), or HazCom Standard, requires employers to inform and train employees about the hazards associated with the chemicals in their workplace [29 CFR 1910.1200].

Employers must:

- Develop and maintain a written HazCom program,
- Ensure chemical containers are properly labeled,
- Keep a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each hazardous chemical,
- Ensure each SDS is “readily accessible” to employees, and
- Provide training to employees.

Failure to create a written program and failure to provide training for employees are among the most common violations of the HCS cited by OSHA every year.

The HazCom Standard also requires chemical manufacturers, importers, and distributors to classify the chemicals they produce, ensure shipped containers are properly labeled, and provide specific information to employers.

Read more:

[Tips for Writing a Hazard Communication Program](#)





# 1

## Fall Protection—General Requirements (Construction Industry)

Year after year, failure to provide adequate fall protection systems in the construction industry is by far the most frequently cited OSHA violation.

One particular type of work location covered by the Fall Protection Standard [29 CFR 1926.501] is typically cited more than any other: residential construction.

Those employees who carry out construction activities six feet or more above the ground or above a lower level must be protected by guardrail systems, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems [29 CFR 1926.501(b)(13)].

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about one-third of all deaths in the construction industry are due to falls to a lower level.

More than **300** construction workers fall to their deaths every year.

Source: [CDC/NIOSH Science Blog](#)





## OSHA Safety, HAZWOPER, and Hazmat Training — When and Where You Want

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888-546-6511



[info@lion.com](mailto:info@lion.com)