



Think Like a Safety Inspector

You may have seen an OSHA compliance officer conduct an inspection of your jobsite. OSHA's inspectors are highly trained professionals who can recognize and evaluate hazards in the workplace. They can enter and inspect a jobsite as part of their general duties, or in response to a specific complaint. Their objective is to reduce hazardous conditions on the job to make your workplace safe.

In that regard, you have a lot in common with these compliance officers. You both want to reduce the hazardous conditions on the job, and you're both familiar with how to identify hazards. However, inspectors may come around to your particular jobsite only occasionally, whereas you are on the jobsite every day. Because you have the most to gain from your workplace being safe, you should think and act like a safety inspector.

We spend more of our waking hours at work than we do at home. We spend all those hours working, moving materials around the worksite, walking from one area to another, eating lunch, and taking breaks. What would it be like if we stayed alert and looked for the safety hazards and violation around us? If every worker did this, think about all the eyes and ears looking out for hazards. It would be like having a safety inspector on the site all day, every day, keeping an eye out for hazardous conditions and safety violations (minus the fines that come with the official inspection).

You are a highly trained professional. You've been trained to recognize what's safe and unsafe. You have experience and knowledge. Quite frankly, no one knows your job better than you do. Put that knowledge to work for your safety and your coworkers' safety. As an employee, you have a responsibility to correct unsafe conditions. Fix what you can and tell your supervisor about the things you can't fix yourself. Your contribution could be something as small as removing an object from a walkway to reduce the likelihood of someone tripping or reminding a co-worker to wear their personal protective equipment (PPE).

As you go about your day at work, think of yourself as a safety inspector. Look for unsafe conditions or acts. Stop and chat with co-workers to help them correct the unsafe condition or action. Give them a pat on the back if they're wearing PPE and working safely. You can make a difference and you might even save a life.

SAFETY REMINDER

You can also do your part by setting a good example. Don't take shortcuts or ignore safe practices because you never know who might be looking up to you.