



Reply to the attention of:

DEP/GIAE/TWM - 27922

**JUN 21 2017**

Mr. Michael Owen  
Senior Consultant  
On-site Training and Consulting Group  
3250 Roscommon Drive  
Glenelg, Maryland 21737

Dear Mr. Owen:

Thank you for your letter to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requesting clarification of OSHA standards' training requirements. This constitutes OSHA's interpretation only of the requirements discussed and may not be applicable to any question not delineated within your original correspondence.

Your questions are paraphrased below, and our responses follow:

**Background/Scenario:** My employer has been told by a training vendor that their online training (computer-based training without a hands-on skill component or verification of competent skill performance by a qualified trainer) satisfies the training requirement for the following OSHA standards:

- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.38, Emergency Action Plans
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous waste operations and emergency response
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.146, Permit-required confined spaces
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.147, The control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout)
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.132, Personal Protective Equipment, General requirements
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.157, Portable Fire Extinguishers
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.25, Stairways
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.27, Scaffolds and rope descent systems
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.503, Fall Protection, Training Requirements
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.268, Telecommunications
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.21, Safety training and education
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1000, Air contaminants
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1001, Asbestos
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1200(h), Hazard Communication
- OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.332(a), Electrical, Training

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.97, Nonionizing radiation  
OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1025(l), Lead  
OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.62(l)(1), Lead

**Question #1:** Can an employer meet the training requirements for the OSHA standards above via on-line training only?

**Response #1:** No. Online training alone would not meet the requirements of these training standards. The word “train” is defined as “[t]o make proficient with special instructions and practice,” Webster’s II New Collegiate Dictionary, 1995, p. 1,169. These standards require training in physical skills, such as using a fire extinguisher and the proper use and care of personal protective equipment. The only way these physical skills can be learned is by actually practicing them.

However, the standards cited above do not require verification of competent performance, except as follows:

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous waste operations and response

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.132, Personal Protective Equipment, General Requirements

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.146, Permit required confined spaces

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.147, The control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout)

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.268, Telecommunications

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.332, Electrical Safety-Related Work Practices, Training

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1001, Asbestos

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1025, Lead

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.1200, Hazard Communication

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.21, Safety training and education

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.59, Hazard Communication

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.62, Lead

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.65, Hazardous waste operations and emergency response

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.1101, Asbestos

**Question #2:** Can an employer meet the annual refresher training requirements for the OSHA standards listed above via on-line training only?

**Response #2:** No. Please refer to the response to Question #1.

**Question #3:** Is the employer required to provide site or company specific training regarding any of the listed standards?

**Response #3:** Yes, for example, OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.120, Hazardous waste operations and response, requires the following concerning site specific training:

**1910.120(e)(3)**

*Initial training.*

**1910.120(e)(3)(i)**

General site workers (such as equipment operators, general laborers and supervisory personnel) engaged in hazardous substance removal or other activities which expose or potentially expose workers to hazardous substances and health hazards shall receive a minimum of 40 hours of instruction off the site, and a minimum of three days actual field experience under the direct supervision of a trained experienced supervisor.

**1910.120(e)(3)(ii)**

Workers on site only occasionally for a specific limited task (such as, but not limited to, ground water monitoring, land surveying, or geophysical surveying) and who are unlikely to be exposed over permissible exposure limits and published exposure limits shall receive a minimum of 24 hours of instruction off the site, and the minimum of one day actual field experience under the direct supervision of a trained, experienced supervisor.

**1910.120(e)(3)(iii)**

Workers regularly on site who work in areas which have been monitored and fully characterized indicating that exposures are under permissible exposure limits and published exposure limits where respirators are not necessary, and the characterization indicates that there are no health hazards or the possibility of an emergency developing, shall receive a minimum of 24 hours of instruction off the site, and the minimum of one day actual field experience under the direct supervision of a trained, experienced supervisor.

**1910.120(e)(3)(iv)**

Workers with 24 hours of training who are covered by paragraphs (e)(3)(ii) and (e)(3)(iii) of this section, and who become general site workers or who are



required to wear respirators, shall have the additional 16 hours and two days of training necessary to total the training specified in paragraph (e)(3)(i).

**1910.120(e)(4)**

*Management and supervisor training.* On-site management and supervisors directly responsible for, or who supervise employees engaged in, hazardous waste operations shall receive 40 hours initial training, and three days of supervised field experience (the training may be reduced to 24 hours and one day if the only area of their responsibility is employees covered by paragraphs (e)(3)(ii) and (e)(3)(iii)) and at least eight additional hours of specialized training at the time of job assignment on such topics as, but not limited to, the employer's safety and health program and the associated employee training program, personal protective equipment program, spill containment program, and health hazard monitoring procedure and techniques.

**1910.120(e)(5)**

*Qualifications for trainers.* Trainers shall be qualified to instruct employees about the subject matter that is being presented in training. Such trainers shall have satisfactorily completed a training program for teaching the subjects they are expected to teach, or they shall have the academic credentials and instructional experience necessary for teaching the subjects. Instructors shall demonstrate competent instructional skills and knowledge of the applicable subject matter.

**1910.120(e)(6)**

*Training certification.* Employees and supervisors that have received and successfully completed the training and field experience specified in paragraphs (e)(1) through (e)(4) of this section shall be certified by their instructor or the head instructor and trained supervisor as having completed the necessary training. A written certificate shall be given to each person so certified. Any person who has not been so certified or who does not meet the requirements of paragraph (e)(9) of this section shall be prohibited from engaging in hazardous waste operations.

**1910.120(e)(7)**

*Emergency response.* Employees who are engaged in responding to hazardous emergency situations at hazardous waste clean-up sites that may expose them to hazardous substances shall be trained in how to respond to such expected emergencies.

**1910.120(e)(8)**

*Refresher training.* Employees specified in paragraph (e)(1) of this section, and managers and supervisors specified in paragraph (e)(4) of this section, shall

receive eight hours of refresher training annually on the items specified in paragraph (e)(2) and/or (e)(4) of this section, any critique of incidents that have occurred in the past year that can serve as training examples of related work, and other relevant topics.

#### **1910.120(e)(9)**

*Equivalent training.* Employers who can show by documentation or certification that an employee's work experience and/or training has resulted in training equivalent to that training required in paragraphs (e)(1) through (e)(4) of this section shall not be required to provide the initial training requirements of those paragraphs to such employees and shall provide a copy of the certification or documentation to the employee upon request. However, certified employees or employees with equivalent training new to a site shall receive appropriate, site specific training before site entry and have appropriate supervised field experience at the new site. Equivalent training includes any academic training or the training that existing employees might have already received from actual hazardous waste site experience.

OSHA's policy concerning safety and health training, which applies to all of the Agency's agriculture, construction, general industry, and maritime training requirements, is detailed in a memorandum to OSHA's Regional Administrators, entitled OSHA Training Standards Policy Statement, dated April 28, 2010 (<https://www.osha.gov/dep/standards-policy-statement-memo-04-28-10.html>), states:

Additionally, OSHA's training provisions contain a variety of specific requirements related to employee comprehension. For example, §1910.147(c)(7)(i) (Lockout/Tagout) requires the employer to verify that the employees have "acquired" the knowledge and skills which they have been trained; §1910.134(k)(5)(ii) (Respiratory Protection) requires retraining when "inadequacies in the employee's knowledge or use of the respirator indicate that the employee has not retained the requisite understanding or skill;" §1910.1030(g)(2)(vii)(N) (Bloodborne Pathogens) requires "[a]n opportunity for interactive questions and answers with the person conducting the training session;" and many other standards have analogous requirements. Employers need to examine the standards applicable to their workplaces to be familiar with these specific requirements.

Thank you for your interest in occupational safety and health. We hope you find this information helpful. OSHA's requirements are set by statute, standards, and regulations. Our letters of interpretation do not create new or additional requirements but rather explain these requirements and how they apply to particular circumstances. This letter constitutes OSHA's interpretation of the requirements discussed. From time to time, letters are affected when the Agency updates a standard, a legal decision impacts a standard, or changes in technology affect the interpretation. To assure that you are using the correct information and guidance, please consult OSHA's website at

<http://www.osha.gov>. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact the Directorate of Enforcement Programs at (202) 693-2100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Galassi", written in a cursive style.

*foe* Thomas Galassi, Director  
Directorate of Enforcement Programs