



Health & Safety Questions?

Get in touch with the Health & Safety Network to learn more about safety in the workplace. Email Health-Safety@culturalheritage.org or join the Health & Safety Network Forum to pose your question to U.S.-based experts!

What to Expect When You Request an On-Site OSHA Consultation Visit

Workers employed by museums and cultural heritage sites may be exposed to occupational hazards, and most museums that have one or more employees are required to follow OSHA's regulations. For small and medium-sized employers without a safety manager on staff, these regulations may seem difficult to understand.

OSHA's On-Site Consultation program offers free, confidential occupational safety and health services to help you meet the regulations so that you can reduce risks of illness and injuries to your workers. All fifty states, the District of Columbia, and several US Territories have an on-site consultation program.

On-site consultants are NOT enforcement inspectors. Consultants work with employers to identify workplace hazards, develop effective safety and health programs, and provide advice for compliance with OSHA standards. In return for your commitment to implement the recommendations, these individuals will continue to work with you at no cost on training your staff, conducting exposure monitoring, helping write job hazard analyses, and suggesting cost-effective controls.

For example, Connecticut's on-site consultation program conducts consultation visits for museums. During a recent consultation visit, museum administrators were provided with resources to help assess potential hazards associated with maintaining and displaying their collections. In addition, sample programs which could be used in developing site-specific plans were shared. The following is a summary of some of the health and safety topics and OSHA standards on-site consultants can help museums address.

HAZARD COMMUNICATION (1910.1200)

The Hazard Communication standard, sometimes referred to as the "Employee Right-To-Know" standard, requires information on chemical substances be passed down to employees so that they can take steps to protect themselves. Employees may be exposed to chemical substances (i.e., paints, epoxies, and solvents) while fabricating displays or restoring artwork/artifacts. In addition, there may be hazards inherent in the collections themselves, such as toxic metals in paint pigments or residual pesticides used to preserve an artifact. The basic requirements of the program include:

- › A written hazard communication program.
- › A list of hazardous chemicals (i.e., solvents, paints, preservatives, etc.) used or stored in the facility.
- › A copy of a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical substance used or stored in the facility.
- › Employee training.

HAZARD ASSESSMENT FOR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (1910.132)

The OSHA standard for personal protective equipment (PPE) requires employers to assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present which necessitate the use of PPE. Individual job tasks should be carefully evaluated and PPE selected based on the tasks performed. Employers must communicate selection decisions for PPE to each affected employee and ensure that each employee is trained to know what PPE is necessary and how to wear, care for, and dispose of the PPE.

SUBSTANCE SPECIFIC OSHA STANDARDS

If there is a potential for exposure to hazardous materials such as formaldehyde (1910.1048), inorganic arsenic (1910.1018) or lead (1910.1025), the employer may be required to conduct an initial exposure assessment and, in some cases, develop a respiratory protection program (1910.134).

OSHA LOGS OF RECORDABLE OCCUPATIONAL INJURIES AND ILLNESSES (1904.29)

OSHA 300, 300A, and 301 Forms, or equivalent forms, for recordable injuries and illnesses must be maintained if a museum has more than ten employees at any time during the calendar year.

PHYSICAL HAZARDS

When maintaining and displaying collection items, employees may lift and carry heavy objects and work on scaffolds and ladders. In addition, museums' wood shops, paint booths, printing presses, and vehicle maintenance garages present additional occupational hazards. OSHA's [Small Business Safety and Health Handbook](#) provides checklists to address standards that address these hazards.

OSHA's on-site consultation programs can help cultural heritage institutions, museums, and industry professionals understand and better manage their health and safety risks with free and confidential services. To find the contact information for your region's program, visit: www.osha.gov/consultation/directory-text.

—Savita Trivedi, CIH and Anne Bracker, MPH, CIH, CONN-OSHA, Connecticut's On-site Consultation Program, Ph: 860-263-6900, www.connosha.com

AIC Respirator Fit Test Program

Whether you are using hazardous chemicals in your laboratory or working with mold-infested artifacts after a flood, you need to be protected with a properly fitting respirator. This workshop will provide the participant with access to an online lecture on respirator selection, care, and use, as well as a 20-minute, individual appointment for a personal respirator fit test, ensuring an acceptable, face-to-facepiece seal/fit of their respirator. The individual appointment provides an opportunity for participants to ask any specific questions of industrial hygienists, and to examine or try on various half-mask, air-purifying respirators from the Committee's selection of samples. You MUST bring your personal respirator for the fit test.

This AIC Respirator Fit Test Program is targeted towards conservators who may not have access to a Safety Professional to conduct the test or do not have respirator fit testing available through their employer, but is open to all interested parties. This workshop is in accordance with the U.S. OSHA Standard (29CFR1910.134 - Respiratory Protection). The online lecture and fit test appointments will be conducted by a Certified Industrial Hygienist.

Individuals wishing to get a fit test using their respirator MUST:

- › Register for the Respirator Fit Test at the AIC Annual Meeting by using the "Add Session" option as you register or on your current registration.
- › Watch the REQUIRED online lecture and take the corresponding quiz.
- › Schedule a fit test appointment. The appointments will be scheduled to take place in 20-minute intervals from 10:00am - 5:00pm on Monday, May 16, 2022.
- › Complete a REQUIRED medical evaluation within twelve months PRIOR to your fit test. The medical evaluation must be performed by a healthcare professional. The Questionnaire to be filled out by your provider is included in the OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire Infosheet. <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CFPC/files/ko/2020/Fit-Testing/OSHA-Medical-Info-Sheet.pdf>