

by Todd Briggs

## **Hispanic Worker Outreach: OSHA Can Help!**

Hispanic workers, especially workers in high risk industries like construction or agriculture, continue to be disproportionately injured and killed on the job. In 2003, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported that 791 Hispanic workers were killed on the job accounting for 14% of the 5,559 total deaths that occurred in the United States. The 791 deaths represented a fatality rate 13% higher than the rate for all workers.

Are you an employer with a Hispanic workforce in a high-risk industry, like construction? Do you need help in reaching out to your Spanish-speaking employees? Are you having difficulty identifying Spanish-language compliance assistance outreach and training materials to give to your Hispanic workers to keep them safe from occupational injury, illness and death? These are just a few of the situations that more and more employers are experiencing today due to the large, and increasing, Hispanic labor force in the United States.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has made immigrant worker workplace safety a priority within the Agency and is committed to identifying ways to improve the safety and health of immigrant and other hard-to-reach workers. OSHA has developed numerous Spanish-language compliance assistance tools and resources designed to assist employers and workers with their Hispanic outreach activities including safety cards, booklets, posters, electronic compliance assistance tools, training and various cooperative programs.

Employers who need help reaching out to their Spanish-speaking employees can turn to OSHA for assistance. For example, the OSHA Web page ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)) offers numerous Spanish-language compliance assistance tools and resources including:

- [The Hispanic Employers and Workers Compliance Assistance Web Page](#) which identifies Spanish-language compliance assistance resources available from OSHA as well as other federal agencies and non-governmental organizations.
- [The Hispanic Outreach Module of the Compliance Assistance Quick Start](#) which helps the employer identify OSHA Spanish-language resources, details how employers can work cooperatively with OSHA and provides a list of whom they can contact for additional information.
- [The Hispanic Outreach Fact Sheet](#) assists employers with their Hispanic outreach activities by highlighting OSHA's Spanish-language compliance assistance, outreach and training resources including Web pages, publications and cooperative programs.
- OSHA developed 9 [English-to-Spanish/Spanish-English Dictionaries](#) that consist of over 2000 general OSHA, general industry and construction industry terms. The dictionaries are intended to assist OSHA, Susan Harwood Training Grant Awardees and others in their Spanish-language translation initiatives. The frequently used general industry and frequently used construction industry terms in the dictionaries include a phonetic pronunciation guide.
- The Spanish-language [Construction eTool](#) is a stand-alone, interactive, Web-based occupational safety and health training tool, which helps employers and workers identify and control the hazards in the areas of electrical safety, falls, stuck-by and trenching and excavation.

- [Hispanic Outreach Success Stories](#) highlight employers who have implemented Hispanic worker outreach, education and training programs or established best practices and have reported successful results.

Do you need copies of OSHA Spanish-language materials to distribute to your Hispanic workers? Examples of Spanish-language publications available from OSHA include:

- [All About OSHA](#)
- [OSHA: Ready to Help You!](#)
- [Heat Stress Card](#)
- [Cold Stress Card](#)
- [Fact Sheets](#) on various topics including chainsaws, electrical safety, falls, personal protective equipment, tree trimming and workplace violence.

Please call the OSHA Publications Office at (202) 693-1888 or simply order directly from the [OSHA Publications Web Page!](#)

If you and your workers do not have access to the internet, OSHA also maintains a national hotline (1-800-321-OSHA) with a Spanish-language option to allow callers an opportunity to contact OSHA. Employers may also contact OSHA's [Hispanic/English-as-a-Second \(ESL\) Coordinators](#), available in each of the OSHA regions, to answer questions and assist you with your Hispanic employer and worker outreach activities.

Do you need help in training your Hispanic workers? The Agency offers multiple Spanish-language training options to help Hispanic employers and employees improve their knowledge of safe and healthful work practices. For example:

- The OSHA [Education Centers](#) offer Spanish-language training courses.
- The OSHA [Regional/Area Offices](#) periodically offer the OSHA 10-Hour training course for free.
- The Oregon State Plan [PESO Training Program](#) has various Spanish-language modules on different topics including excavation, fall protection and hazard communication.

The OSHA Web site, Spanish-language publications and the training resources are really terrific but how can you work cooperatively with OSHA? OSHA's [Consultation Program](#), a free consultation service largely funded by OSHA, has developed numerous Spanish-language outreach materials that can assist employers with their Hispanic worker outreach activities. For example:

- [The Georgia Tech Safety and Health Consultation Program](#) has developed a collection of training materials and a video intended for Spanish-speaking construction workers.
- [The Texas Workers Compensation Commission](#) has an extensive library of free safety and health material translated into Spanish.
- [The University of South Florida Web Page](#) contains a collection of free Spanish-language brochures which employers can use to distribute to their Hispanic workers. Available publications include "Excavation Training," "Health Hazard Protection" and "Construction Fall Protection."

Through the [Alliance Program](#), OSHA has established cooperative relationships at the national, regional and area office levels to develop and coordinate the delivery of outreach materials and training, including those for the Hispanic worker community. Examples of Alliances focusing on Hispanic employer and worker issues include:

- OSHA and the [National Federation of Independent Businesses](#) (NFIB) signed a national Alliance June 14, 2004 to make health and safety information and compliance assistance resources available to all employers, especially Hispanic employers and small and independent businesses, and to communicate the need for the implementation of safety and health management system programs in the workplace.
- The [OSHA Region II Office](#) in New York City, New York and the Latino Occupational Safety and Health Initiative (LOSHI) sponsored the first Community and Faith-Based Hispanic-Latino Alliance Day Conference October 28, 2004 in New Brunswick, New Jersey to address ways community and faith-based organizations can work with OSHA to reduce occupational illnesses, injuries, and fatalities among Hispanic workers.
- The Region II Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey Area Office signed an Alliance November 17, 2003 with [Community Action for Social Affairs \(CASA\)](#), a local community-based organization primarily representing the Hispanic community in Paterson, New Jersey. The Alliance is working towards OSHA's goal of identifying new and innovative ways to improve the safety and health of immigrants and other hard-to-reach workers with innovative safety and health programs for Hispanic workers and their children.

Please visit the [OSHA Alliance Program Web Page](#) for additional information on these and other activities related to Hispanic workers.

The employer is ultimately responsible for protecting immigrant workers and preventing workplace injury, illness and death. However, as the lead federal agency responsible to assure the safety and health of all of America's workers, including immigrant workers, OSHA is committed to identifying ways to improve the safety and health of hard-to-reach workers and stands ready to assist employers with their Hispanic worker outreach activities.

Please contact OSHA for assistance should you find yourself in one of the above situations. Act to prevent workplace injury, illness and death in your business. Do your part as an employer to provide a safe environment for your Spanish-speaking employees.



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