



OSHA FAQs ON HAZWOPER

Who is covered by OSHA's HAZWOPER standard?

The Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Standard (HAZWOPER) applies to five distinct groups of employers and their employees. This includes any employees who are exposed or potentially exposed to hazardous substances -- including hazardous waste -- and who are engaged in one of the following operations as specified by [1910.120\(a\)\(1\)\(i-v\)](#) and [1926.65\(a\)\(1\)\(i-v\)](#):

- clean-up operations -- required by a governmental body, whether federal, state, local, or other involving hazardous substances -- that are conducted at uncontrolled hazardous waste sites;
- corrective actions involving clean-up operations at sites covered by the **Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA)** as amended (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.);
- voluntary clean-up operations at sites recognized by federal, state, local, or other governmental body as uncontrolled hazardous waste sites;
- operations involving hazardous wastes that are conducted at treatment, storage, and disposal facilities regulated by **Title 40 Code of Federal Regulations** Parts 264 and 265 pursuant to RCRA, or by agencies under agreement with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to implement RCRA regulations; and
- emergency response operations for releases of, or substantial threats of releases of, hazardous substances regardless of the location of the hazard.

Reference Interpretation and Compliance Letters:

- [Hazwoper applications.](#) [11/19/91]
- [Clarification of HAZWOPER to a cleanup operation at a solid waste management unit.](#) [07/14/92]
- [Fires involving spills or releases of hazardous substances.](#) [06/17/91]
- [Interpretation on the application of 1910.120 to clean-up of water-borne releases of hazardous substances.](#) [10/09/89]

What are the HAZWOPER training requirements for on-site workers who are not directly involved in cleanup activities?

Workers, such as utility workers, who must perform duties at a hazardous waste site that has not yet been characterized but where contamination is expected, do fall under the scope of 29 CFR 1910.120. These workers must work under the direction of an on-site supervisor and a site-specific safety and health plan, and must be fully trained and protected pursuant to the HAZWOPER standard. When additional information becomes available through site characterization which verifies that there is minimal or no risk of employee exposure to hazardous substances, a lesser degree of PPE and worker training may be acceptable.

When site characterization shows that the area to be serviced by workers is free of potential exposure, or the proposed work assignments would not expose any of the work

crew to hazardous substances, the activity can be carried out as a normal maintenance or construction operation.

... The utility contractor is bound to provide at least the minimum number of training hours specified. On a hazardous waste site that has many site specific peculiarities the employer may need to train employees beyond the 40 or 24 hour minimum set by the standard. Employees must be provided training that prepares them for their job functions and responsibilities, as stated in the general requirements in 29 CFR 1910.120(e).

Reference Interpretation and Compliance Letters:

- [Employees at a hazardous waste site not necessarily related to clean-up.](#) [9/8/92]
- [Hazwoper applications.](#) [11/19/91]
- [1910.120 Application to Petroleum Product Spills or Releases Subject to State Codes.](#) [7/17/91]

