

# Oregon OSHA Compliance Officer Performance Survey

March 1996 — February 1997

Research & Analysis Section

Department of Consumer & Business Services

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The effectiveness of Oregon OSHA's enforcement program in reducing occupational injuries and illnesses depends to a large degree on the performance of its compliance officers inspecting Oregon workplaces. To assess the quality of work done by OR-OSHA compliance officers, an on-going survey is conducted by the department's Information Management Division. The results of the survey are provided to the Legislature and used to help guide the training of compliance officers in order to improve the effectiveness of OR-OSHA inspections.

## Methods

Each year the survey is conducted for one-half of the compliance officers for one six-month period, and the rest for the next six-month period. This report covers inspections which took place in both periods, from March of 1996 through February of 1997. A questionnaire and cover letter were mailed following issuance of a citation (or closure, if no citation) for every inspection done by a compliance officer in a six-month period. The form was sent to the employer, or person who took the lead role in interacting with the compliance officer during the inspection. This person also received a reminder postcard and phone call, if necessary, to obtain a response.

## Results

Of the 2,406 questionnaires mailed out, 1,912 were returned. Of these, 1,683 usable forms were obtained. Overall, responses to questions about the skills, knowledge, and attitude of compliance officers were favorable. As seen in the following tables and charts, over 90 percent of the responses for most questions were in categories such as excellent and good or very clear and fairly clear. Compliance officers were also given high ratings on a five-point scale for various characteristics, including professionalism, respectfulness, responsiveness, and reasonableness.

**Question 1.** Before the inspection began, was there an opening conference at the inspection location, that is, did the compliance officer take a few minutes to talk to you or an employer representative about the inspection?

### Opening conference held

	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,614	96.7
No	49	2.9
By phone only	6	0.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	14	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

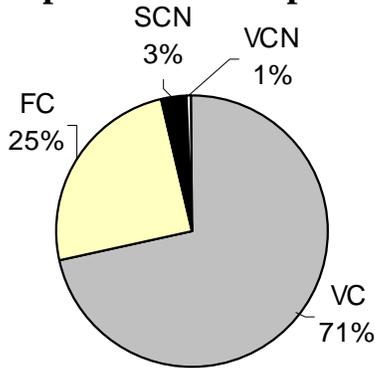
**Question 1a.** If a conference was held, did the compliance officer explain the reason for the inspection during the opening conference?

### Inspection reason explained

	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,584	98.3
No	28	1.7
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>100%</b>
No opening conference	49	
No answer	22	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 1b.** If yes to question 1a, was the explanation very clear, fairly clear, somewhat confusing or very confusing to you?

**Explanation for inspection**



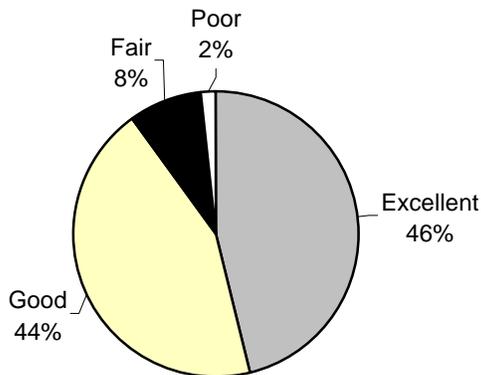
	No. of Responses	Percent
Very clear	1,130	71.3
Fairly clear	397	25.1
Somewhat confusing	47	3.0
Very confusing	10	0.6
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,584</b>	<b>100</b>
No opening conference	49	
No explanation	28	
No answer	22	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Legend for question 1b**

VC — Very clear    SCN — Somewhat confusing  
 FC — Fairly clear    VCN — Very confusing

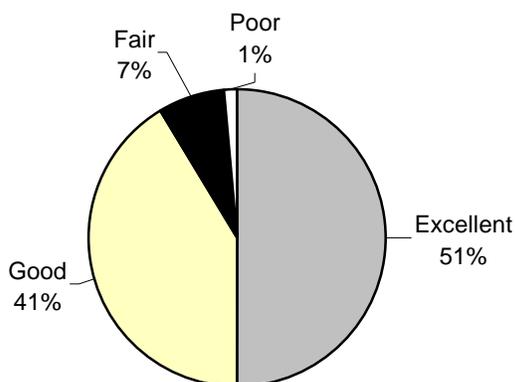
**Question 2.** Below is a list of statements that describe possible qualities of a compliance officer. Please rate the compliance officer as excellent, good, fair or poor.

**2a. Level of familiarity with potential hazards in your workplace**



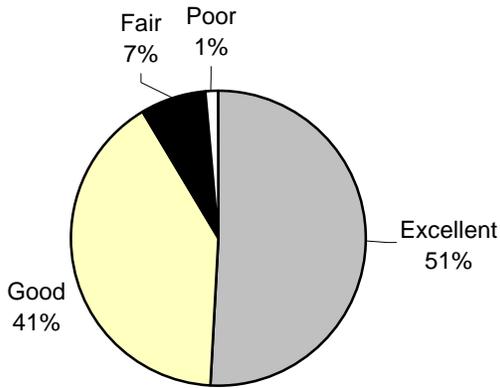
	No. of Responses	Percent
Excellent	768	46.1
Good	732	43.9
Fair	137	8.2
Poor	30	1.8
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,667</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	16	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**2b. Knowledge of applicable regulations**



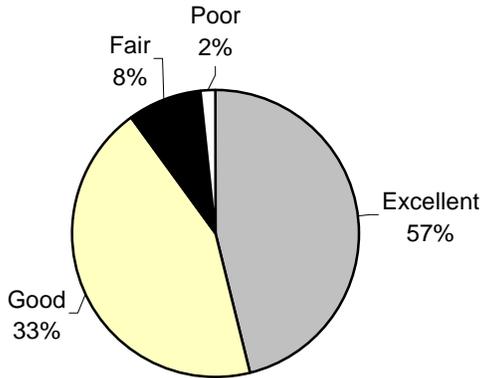
	No. of Responses	Percent
Excellent	846	50.8
Good	695	41.7
Fair	109	6.5
Poor	16	1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,666</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	17	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**2c. Ability to explain rules**



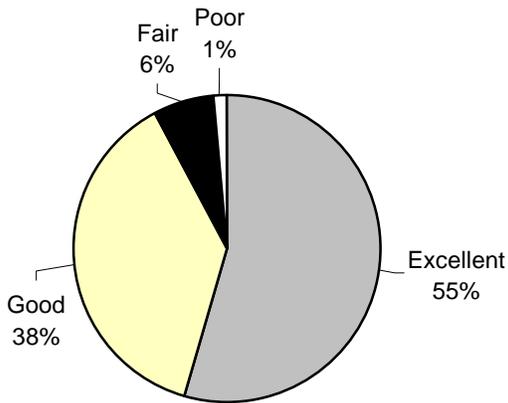
	No. of Responses	Percent
Excellent	850	50.9
Good	676	40.5
Fair	121	7.2
Poor	23	1.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,670</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	13	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**2d. Willingness to listen to and consider your concerns**



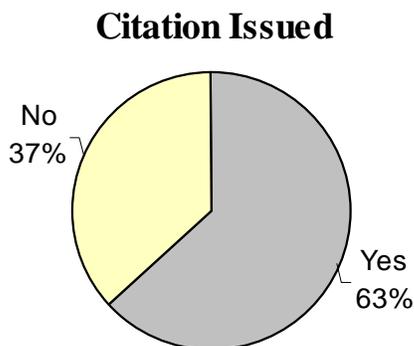
	No. of Responses	Percent
Excellent	950	56.9
Good	550	33.0
Fair	129	7.7
Poor	40	2.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	14	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**2e. Ability to explain any violations or potential hazards**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Excellent	903	54.4
Good	629	37.9
Fair	104	6.3
Poor	24	1.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	23	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

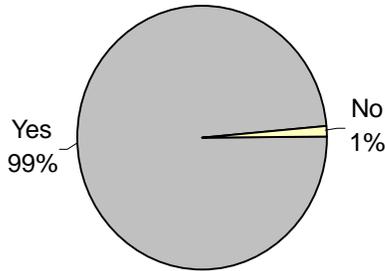
**Question 3.** Did the compliance officer issue a citation for any violation(s) during this inspection?



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,050	63.1
No	615	36.9
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	18	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 3a.** If yes to question 3, did the compliance officer explain each violation to you?

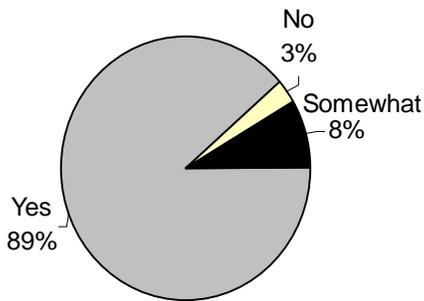
**Explanation for each cited violation**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,030	98.6
No	15	1.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>100%</b>
No citation	615	
No answer	23	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 3b.** If yes to question 3, was the compliance officer willing to work with you in seeking solutions to the problem?

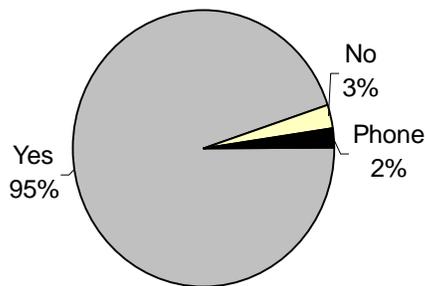
**Willingness to offer solutions**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	927	88.9
No	28	2.7
Somewhat	88	8.4
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>100%</b>
No citation	615	
No answer	25	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 4.** At the end of the inspection, was there a closing conference, that is, did the compliance officer take a few minutes to talk to you or an employer representative about the results of the inspection?

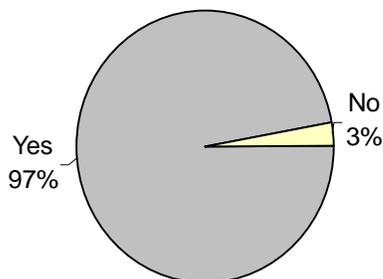
**Closing conference held**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,588	95.1
No	45	2.7
Phone conference only	36	2.2
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,669</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	14	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

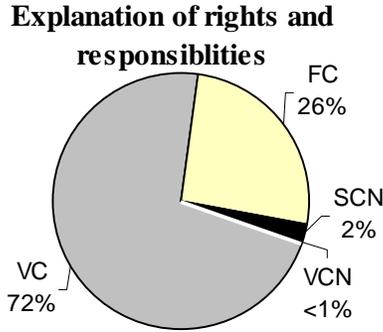
**Question 4a.** If a conference was held, were your rights and responsibilities explained during the closing conference?

**Rights and responsibilities explained**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,530	97.3
No	43	2.7
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,573</b>	<b>100%</b>
No closing conference	45	
No answer	65	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 4b.** If yes to question 4a, was the explanation very clear, fairly clear, somewhat confusing, or very confusing to you?



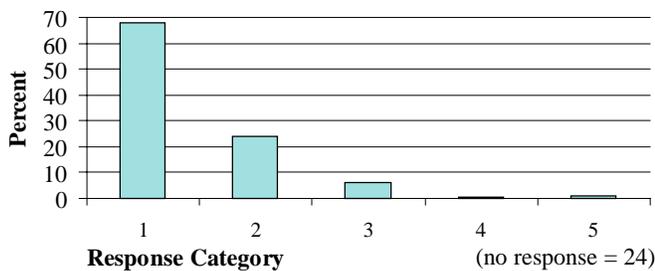
	No. of Responses	Percent
Very clear	1,096	71.8
Fairly clear	391	25.6
Somewhat confusing	35	2.3
Very confusing	5	0.3
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,527</b>	<b>100%</b>
No closing conference	45	
No explanation	43	
No answer	68	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

Legend for question 4b			
VC — Very clear	SCN — Somewhat confusing		
FC — Fairly clear	VCN — Very confusing		

**Question 5.** Below is a list of words which might describe the qualities found in compliance officers. Please rate the compliance officer using the scale provided. For example, if you think the compliance officer was professional, check box 1 in item 5a below. If you think the compliance officer was unprofessional, check box 5. If you think her/his behavior was somewhere in between, check 2, 3 or 4, remembering that 1 and 5 represent the extremes. Please repeat this process for items 5b through 5d.

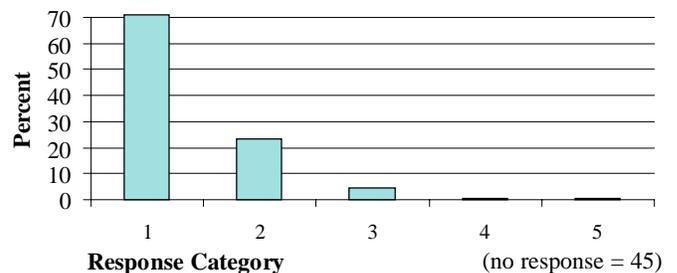
**Question 5a**

Professional...1...2...3...4...5...Unprofessional



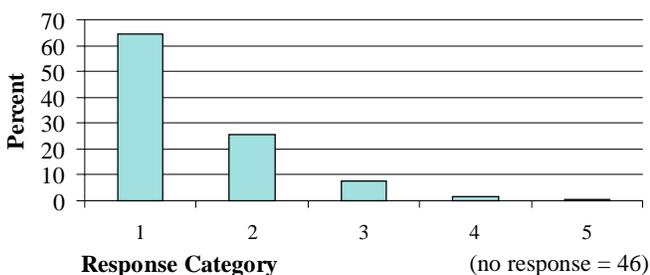
**Question 5b**

Respectful...1...2...3...4...5...Disrespectful



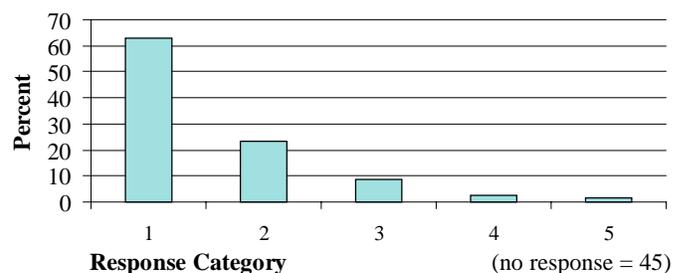
**Question 5c**

Responsive...1...2...3...4...5...Unresponsive

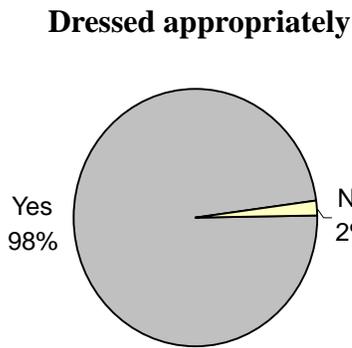


**Question 5d**

Reasonable...1...2...3...4...5...Unreasonable



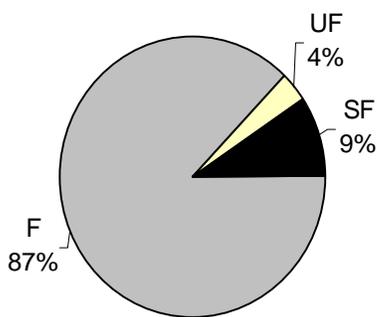
**Question 6.** Was the compliance officer dressed appropriately for your type of business?



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,602	98.0
No	33	2.0
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,635</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	48	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Question 7.** Regardless of whether or not you agree with the outcome of the inspection, do you think the compliance officer applied OR-OSHA rules and regulations fairly or unfairly?

**Application of rules and regulations**



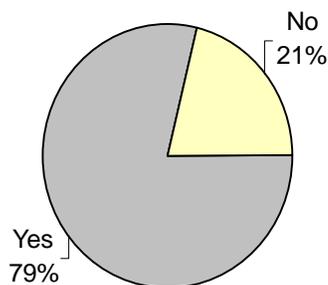
	No. of Responses	Percent
Fairly	1,440	87.3
Somewhat fairly	151	9.2
Unfairly	58	3.5
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,649</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	34	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

**Legend for question 7**

**F** — Fairly      **SF** — Somewhat fairly  
**UF** — Unfairly

**Question 8.** Is it your belief that the inspection will result, or has resulted in any reduction in exposure to workplace hazards?

**Impact of inspection on future hazards**



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,275	78.9
No	341	21.1
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>1,616</b>	<b>100%</b>
No answer	67	
<b>Total surveys</b>	<b>1,683</b>	

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