



Oregon OSHA Compliance Officer Performance Survey, March 1, 2003-June 30, 2004

Information Management Division

Department of Consumer & Business Services

August 2005

by **Linda Althouse**

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 while inspecting Oregon workplaces. To assess the quality of work done by OR-OSHA compliance officers, the department's Information Management Division (IMD) conducts an ongoing survey of employers for Oregon OSHA. 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

The compliance officers are randomly divided into two groups and assigned to one of the two six-month periods of the survey year that begins March 1. Every employer inspected by the compliance officers for the assigned period is surveyed. IMD sends the cover letter and questionnaire to the employer following the issuance of a citation (or closure of the case, if no citation). The employer or the employer's representative during the inspection is asked to complete the survey. If a survey has not been returned after two weeks, IMD sends a reminder postcard to obtain a response.

Results

This report covers the surveys returned for inspections that took place in the two periods March 2003–August 2003 and September 2003–February 2004, as well as surveys returned for inspections during the four months from March 2004 to June 2004. The results for these four months were included due to changes to the survey method and questionnaire that began July 1, 2004 that will require a new reporting format based on the state fiscal year.

Of the total 3,498 questionnaires mailed, 2,581 were returned (a response rate of 74 percent). Of these, 2,501 were useable. Overall, responses to questions about the skills, knowledge, and attitude of compliance officers were favorable. As shown 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 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?

1. Opening conference held

	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,391	95.9
No	86	3.5
By phone only	15	0.6
Total responses	2,492	100%
No answer	9	
Total surveys	2,501	

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

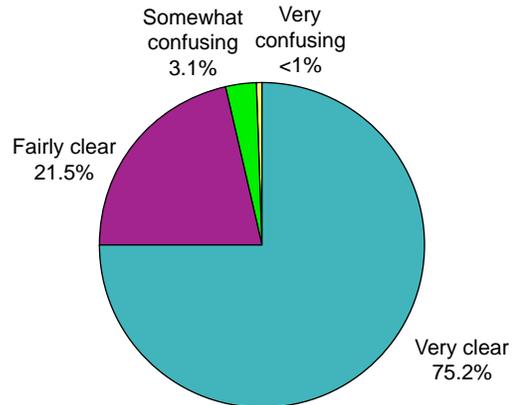
1a. Inspection reason explained

	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,378	99.5
No	12	0.5
Total responses	2,390	100%
No opening conference	86	
No answer	25	
Total surveys	2,501	

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

1b. Explanation of inspection

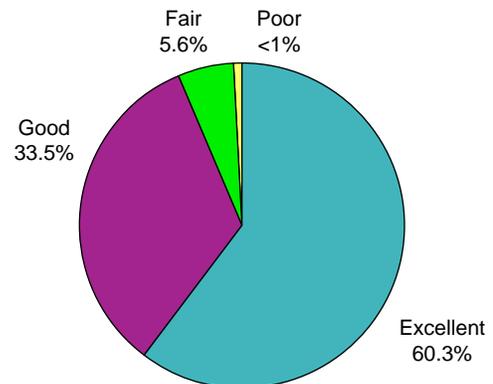
	Number of responses	Percent
Very clear	1,780	75.2
Fairly clear	508	21.5
Somewhat confusing	74	3.1
Very confusing	4	0.2
Total responses	2,366	100%
No opening conference	86	
No explanation	12	
No answer	37	
Total surveys	2,501	



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.

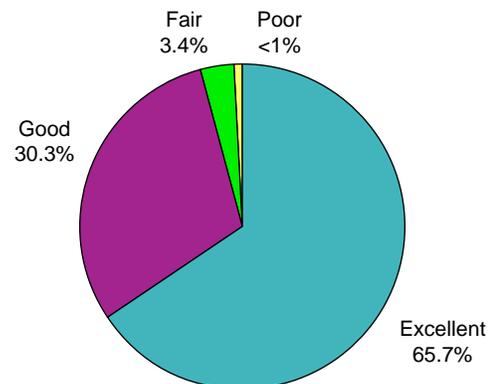
2a. Level of familiarity with potential hazards in your workplace

	Number of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,498	60.3
Good	832	33.5
Fair	139	5.6
Poor	14	0.6
Total responses	2,483	100%
No answer	18	
Total surveys	2,501	



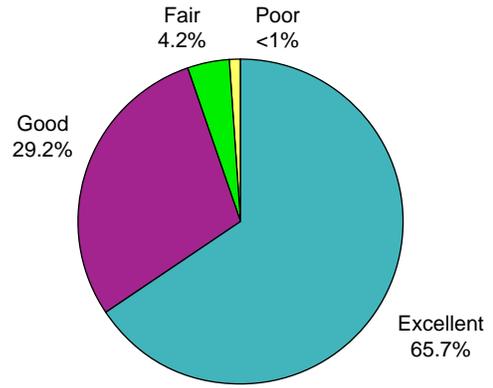
2b. Knowledge of applicable regulations

	Number of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,634	65.7
Good	753	30.3
Fair	85	3.4
Poor	14	0.6
Total responses	2,486	100%
No answer	15	
Total surveys	2,501	



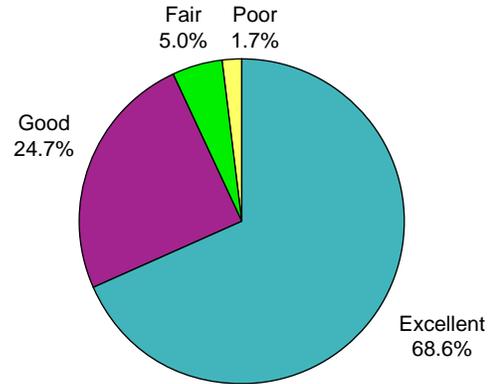
2c. Ability to explain rules

	Number of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,629	65.7
Good	724	29.2
Fair	105	4.2
Poor	23	0.9
Total responses	2,481	100%
No answer	20	
Total surveys	2,501	



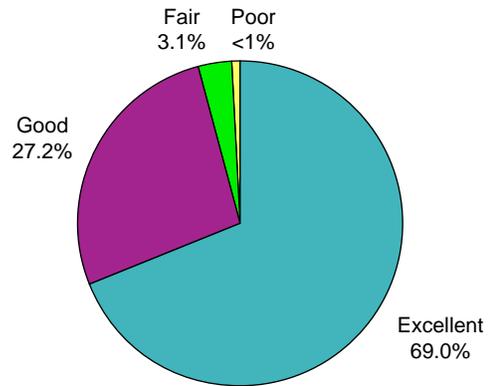
2d. Willingness to listen to and consider your concerns

	Number of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,700	68.6
Good	612	24.7
Fair	123	5.0
Poor	43	1.7
Total responses	2,478	100%
No answer	23	
Total surveys	2,501	



2e. Ability to explain any violations or potential hazards

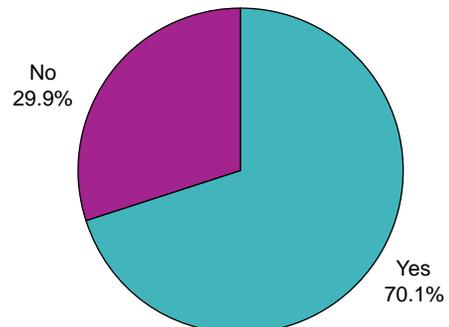
	Number of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,711	69.0
Good	674	27.2
Fair	76	3.1
Poor	19	0.8
Total responses	2,480	100%
No answer	21	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

3. Citation issued

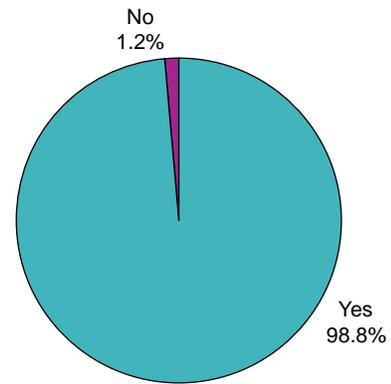
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	1,734	70.1
No	739	29.9
Total responses	2,473	100%
No answer	28	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

3a. Explanation for each cited violation

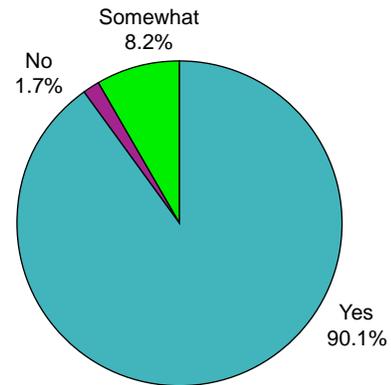
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	1,710	98.8
No	21	1.2
Total responses	1,731	100%
No citation	739	
No answer	31	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

3b. Willingness to offer solutions

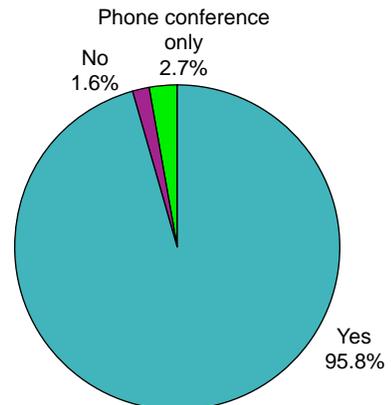
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	1,553	90.1
No	29	1.7
Somewhat	142	8.2
Total responses	1,724	100%
No citation	739	
No answer	38	
Total surveys	2,501	



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?

4. Closing conference held

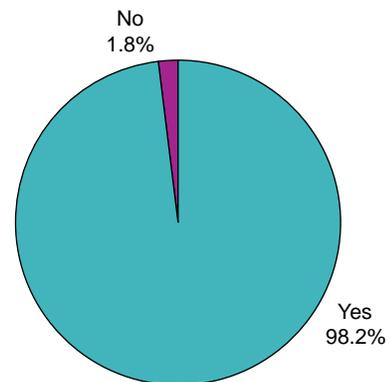
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,380	95.8
No	39	1.6
Phone conference only	66	2.7
Total responses	2,485	100%
No answer	16	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

4a. Rights and responsibilities explained

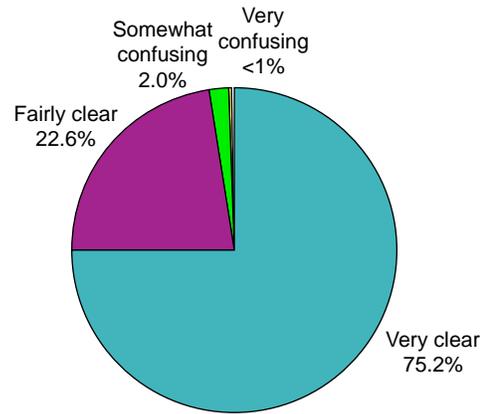
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,345	98.2
No	42	1.8
Total responses	2,387	100%
No closing conference	39	
No answer	75	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

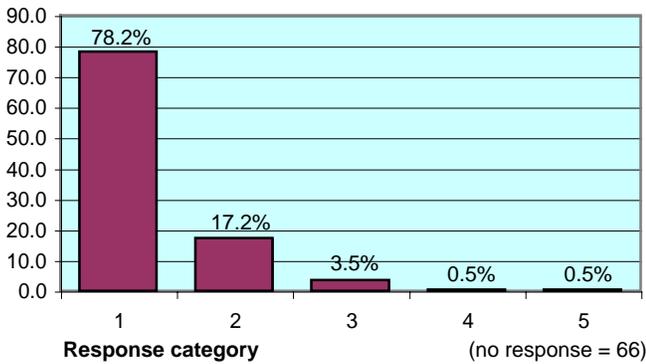
4b. Explanation of rights and responsibilities

	Number of responses	Percent
Very clear	1,754	75.2
Fairly clear	526	22.6
Somewhat confusing	46	2.0
Very confusing	5	0.2
Total responses	2,331	100%
No closing conference	39	
No explanation	42	
No answer	89	
Total surveys	2,501	

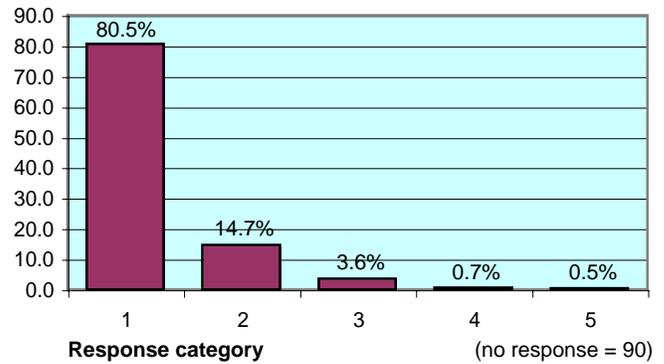


Question 5. Below is a list of words which might describe the qualities found in compliance officers. Please rate the compliance officer using the scale provided. For example, if you think the compliance officer was professional, check box 1 in item 5a below. If you think the compliance officer was unprofessional, 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.

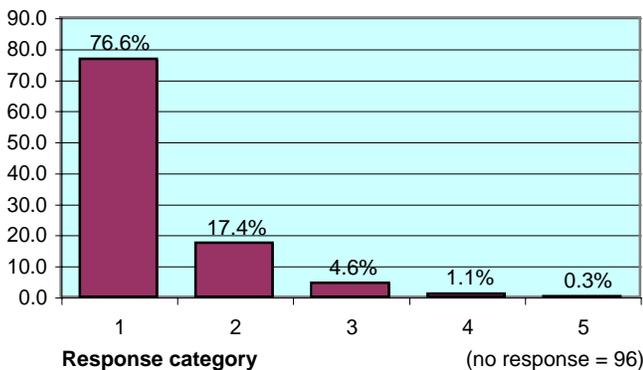
5a. Professional...1...2...3...4...5...Unprofessional



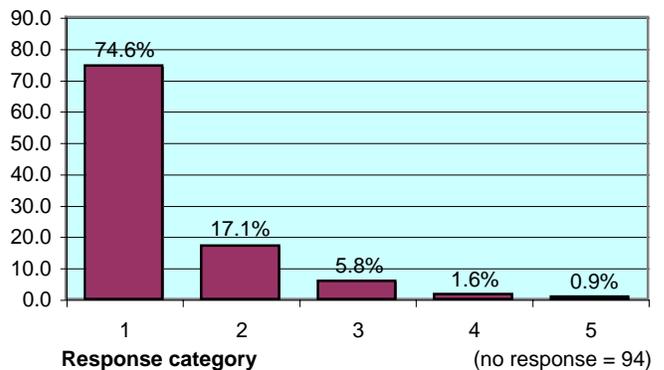
5b. Respectful...1...2...3...4...5...Disrespectful



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



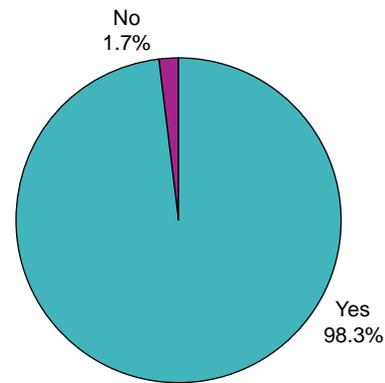
5d. Reasonable...1...2...3...4...5...Unreasonable



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

6. Dressed appropriately

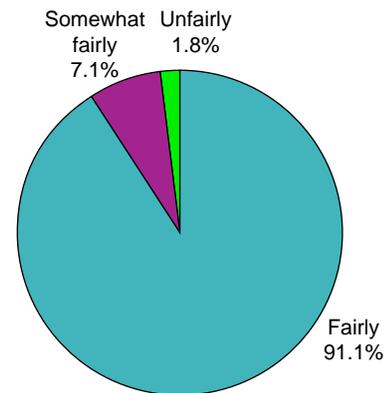
	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,364	98.3
No	41	1.7
Total responses	2,405	100%
No answer	96	
Total surveys	2,501	



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?

7. Application of rules and regulations

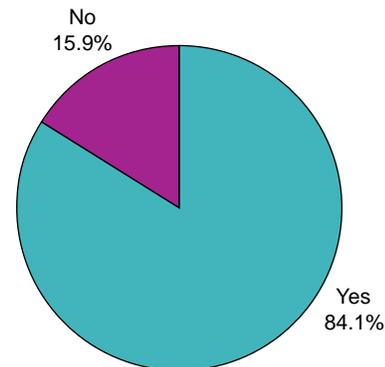
	Number of responses	Percent
Fairly	2,219	91.1
Somewhat fairly	173	7.1
Unfairly	43	1.8
Total responses	2,435	100%
No answer	66	
Total surveys	2,501	



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

8. Impact of inspection on future hazards

	Number of responses	Percent
Yes	2,010	84.1
No	380	15.9
Total responses	2,390	100%
No answer	111	
Total surveys	2,501	



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