

Oregon OSHA Compliance Officer Performance Survey, March 1998-February 1999

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 1998 through February of 1999. 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 2,578 questionnaires mailed out, 1,974 were returned. Of these, 1,813 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?

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

Opening conference held

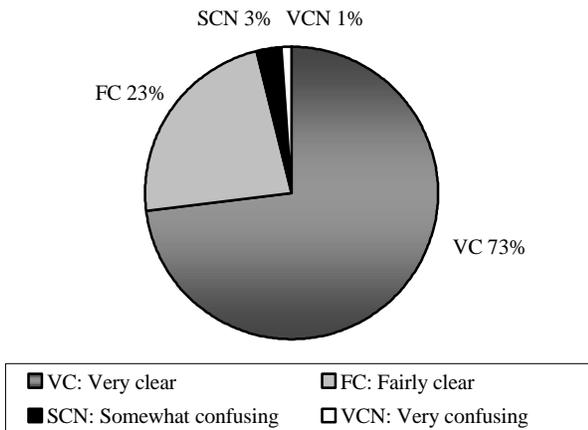
	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,729	96.8
No	51	2.9
By phone only	7	0.4
Total responses	1,787	100%
No answer	26	
Total surveys	1,813	

Inspection reason explained

	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,692	97.9
No	37	2.1
Total responses	1,729	100%
No opening conference	51	
No answer	33	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

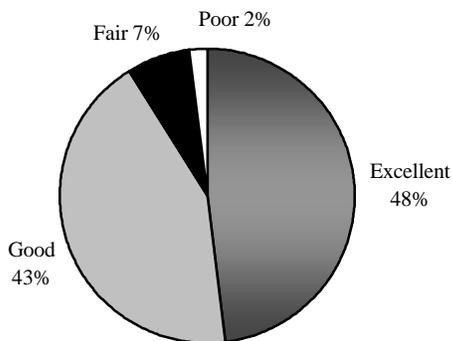
1b. Explanation of inspection



	No. of responses	Percent
Very clear	1,236	73.3
Fairly clear	391	23.2
Somewhat confusing	50	3.0
Very confusing	9	0.5
Total responses	1,686	100%
No opening conference	51	
No explanation	37	
No answer	39	
Total surveys	1,813	

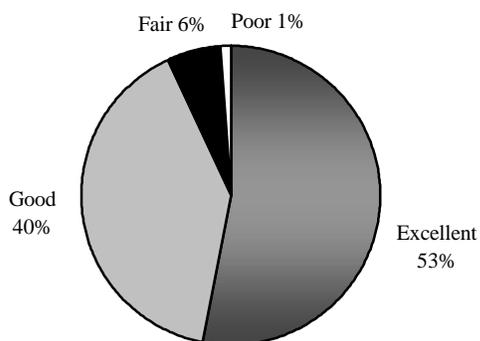
Question 2. Below is a list of statements that describe possible qualities of a compliance officer. Please rate the compliance officer as excellent, good, fair or poor.

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



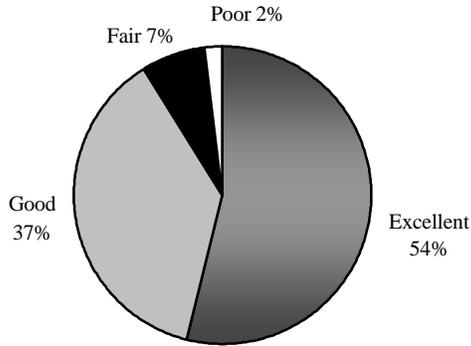
	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	855	47.8
Good	776	43.4
Fair	131	7.3
Poor	27	1.5
Total responses	1,789	100%
No answer	24	
Total surveys	1,813	

2b. Knowledge of applicable regulations



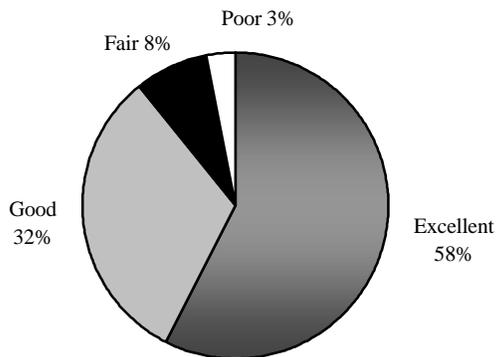
	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	946	52.9
Good	708	39.6
Fair	112	6.3
Poor	23	1.3
Total responses	1,789	100%
No answer	24	
Total surveys	1,813	

2c. Ability to explain rules



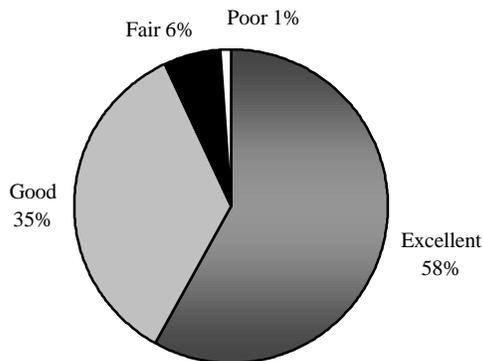
	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	966	53.9
Good	669	37.4
Fair	128	7.1
Poor	28	1.6
Total responses	1,791	100%
No answer	22	
Total surveys	1,813	

2d. Willingness to listen to and consider your concerns



	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,032	57.7
Good	566	31.7
Fair	137	7.7
Poor	53	3.0
Total responses	1,788	100%
No answer	25	
Total surveys	1,813	

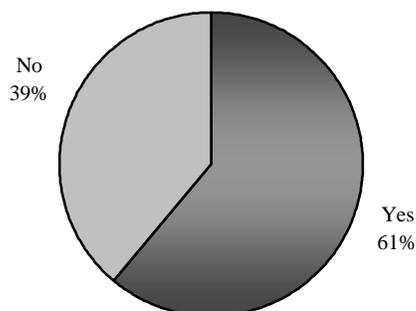
2e. Ability to explain any violations or potential hazards



	No. of responses	Percent
Excellent	1,029	57.7
Good	622	34.9
Fair	107	6.0
Poor	25	1.4
Total responses	1,783	100%
No answer	30	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

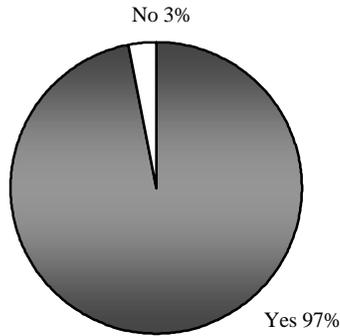
3. Citation issued



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,083	60.6
No	705	39.4
Total responses	1,788	100%
No answer	25	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

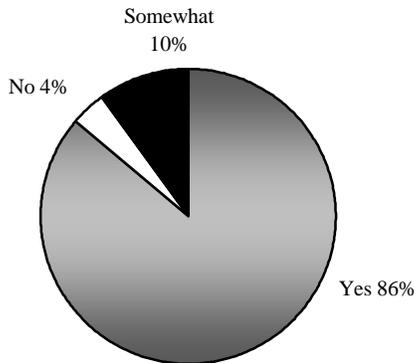
3a. Explanation for each cited violation



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,051	97.4
No	28	2.6
Total responses	1,079	100%
No citation	705	
No answer	29	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

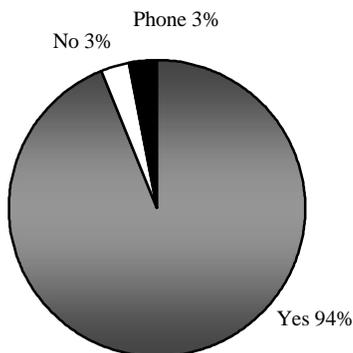
3b. Willingness to offer solutions



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	923	86.3
No	39	3.6
Somewhat	108	10.1
Total responses	1,070	100%
No citation	705	
No answer	38	
Total surveys	1,813	

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?

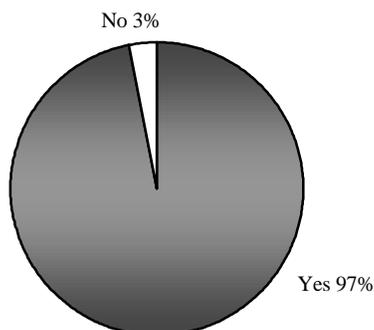
4. Closing conference held



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,682	93.9
No	57	3.2
Phone conference only	52	2.9
Total responses	1,791	100%
No answer	22	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

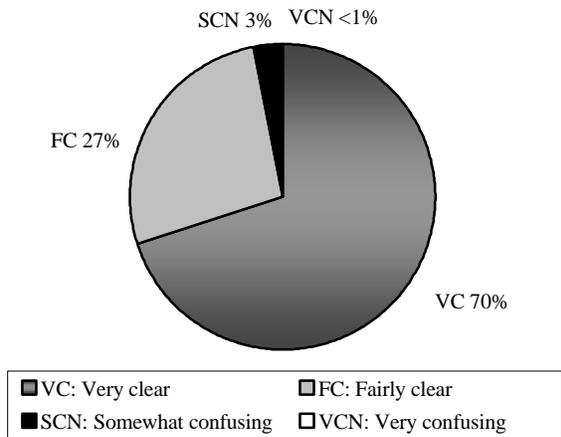
4a. Rights and responsibilities explained



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,626	96.8
No	54	3.2
Total responses	1,671	100%
No closing conference	57	
No answer	85	
Total surveys	1,813	

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

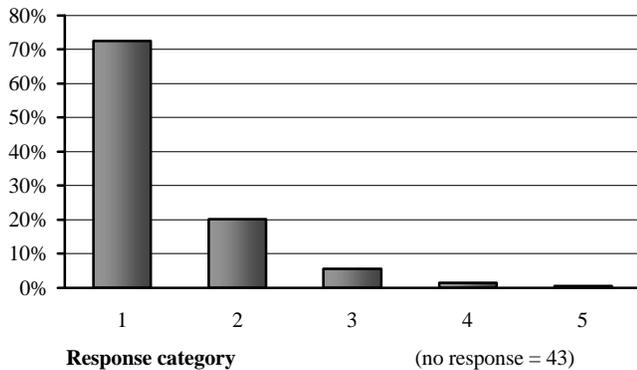


	No. of responses	Percent
Very clear	1,142	70.2
Fairly clear	431	26.5
Somewhat confusing	47	2.9
Very confusing	6	0.4
Total responses	1,626	100%
No closing conference	57	
No explanation	54	
No answer	76	
Total surveys	1,813	

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.

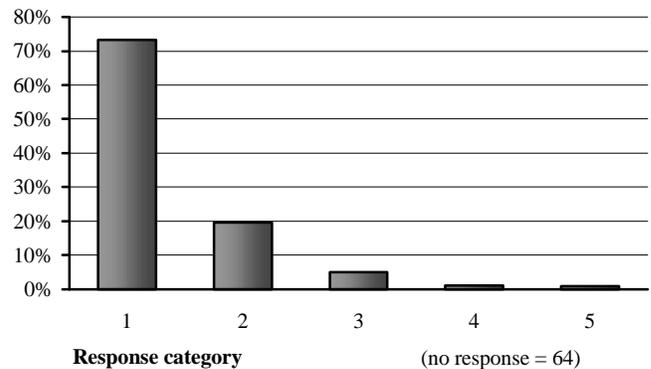
Question 5a

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

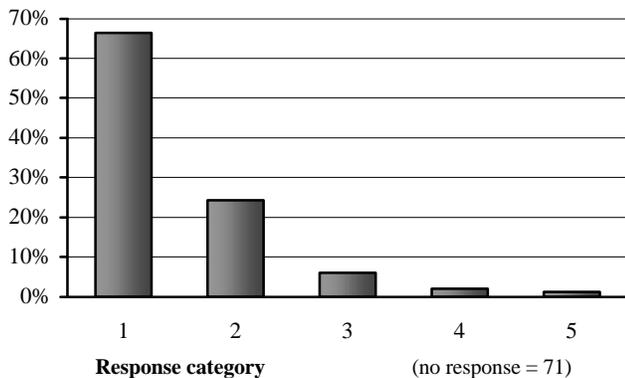


Question 5b

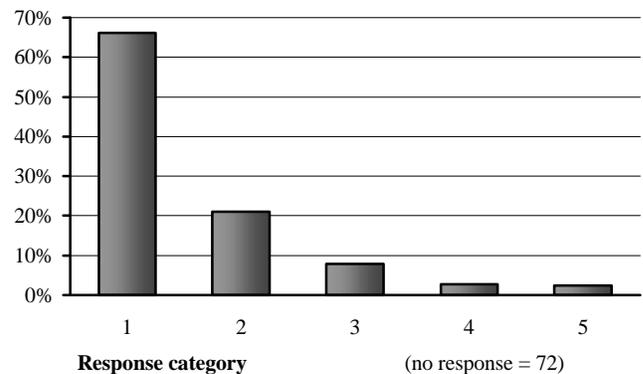
Respectful...1...2...3...4...5...Disrespectful



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

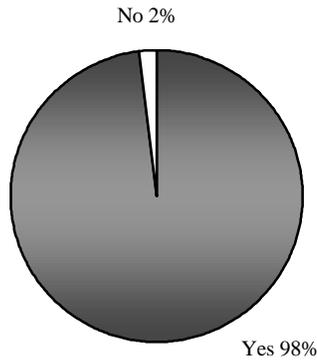


Question 5d Reasonable...1...2...3...4...5...Unreasonable



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

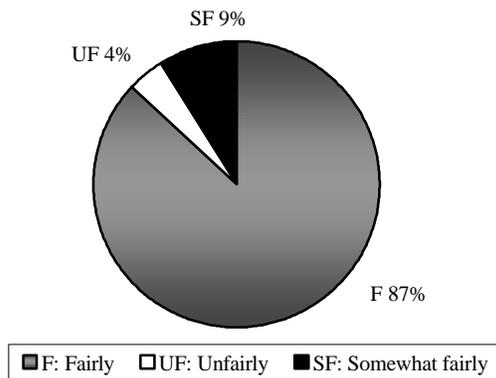
6. Dressed appropriately



	No. of Responses	Percent
Yes	1,730	98.3
No	30	1.7
Total responses	1,760	100%
No answer	53	
Total surveys	1,813	

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?

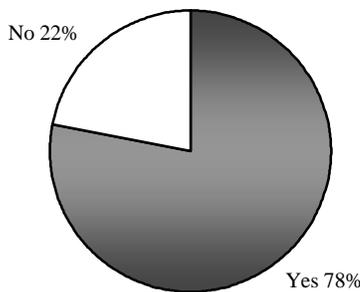
7. Application of rules and regulations



	No. of Responses	Percent
Fairly	1,534	87.1
Somewhat fairly	157	8.9
Unfairly	71	4.0
Total responses	1,762	100%
No answer	51	
Total surveys	1,813	

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



	No. of responses	Percent
Yes	1,342	77.6
No	388	22.4
Total responses	1,730	100%
No answer	83	
Total surveys	1,813	

Note: Percents may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

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