

OSHA Inspection Checklist: A Step-by-Step Guide for Employers When an Inspector Arrives

Labor & Employment Law Update

By Matthew Horn on December 16, 2025

As OSHA inspections continue to take place throughout the U.S., employers across industries need to be prepared to respond. An inspector's arrival onsite can be disruptive and stressful, particularly if supervisors and frontline staff are unsure of what to do or say in the moment.

Having a clear, actionable plan in place helps employers maintain control of the process, assert their rights when necessary, and avoid unnecessary missteps that could increase risk or exposure.

The steps outlined below are designed to help employers navigate an OSHA inspection from the moment an inspector arrives, underscoring the importance of preparation as a key component of an effective workplace compliance strategy.

STEP 1:

Stop whatever you are doing.

STEP 2:

Introduce yourself to the inspector. Be polite.

STEP 3:

Tell the inspector that you need to contact the owner, HR director, and/or safety manager, who needs to be present before any inspection activities begin (the "Response Team").

STEP 4:

Politely ask the inspector to wait in a conference room or outside until the Response Team has arrived. Notify everyone onsite that an OSHA inspector is there.

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STEP 5:

Contact everyone on the Response Team, including:

- _____, Ph.# _____
- _____, Ph.# _____
- _____, Ph.# _____
- _____, Ph.# _____

STEP 6:

Ask the Response Team members if they intend to take part in the OSHA inspection, and if so, how long until they are at the facility. Ask if you should move the inspector move to a different location other than his/her current location.

STEP 7:

Tell the inspector how long you expect it to be before the Response Team arrives, and apologize for the delay.

STEP 8:

Once all Response Team members are onsite, ask the OSHA inspector the basis for the inspection:

- Employee injury?
- Employee complaint? If an employee complaint, request a copy of the complaint.
- Scheduled inspection?
- Observed a hazard from a public right of way?

STEP 9:

Ask the OSHA inspector to define the scope of the inspection—i.e. what does he/she intend to look at and inspect? The scope should be limited to the basis for the inspection. For example, the basis is an employee injured, the inspection should be limited to the area and things involved in that injury.

STEP 10:

Accompany OSHA inspector during his physical inspection of the facility.

- **Limit the inspector's inspection to only those items involved in the employee injury or referenced in the employee complaint.**

- If the inspector takes a picture or a sample, take the same picture or sample.
- If the inspector does not take pictures or samples that would be good for you, take them yourself.

STEP 11:

If the OSHA inspector wants to interview hourly employees, advise the hourly employees of their rights before their interviews:

- They are not required to sit for an interview unless they are willing to do so;
- They can stop the interview at any point during the interview;
- They are entitled to have their union steward or attorney at the interview if they so desire;
- They are entitled to an interpreter if they believe they need one; and
- They are not required to be recorded or to sign a statement prepared by the inspector, but may sign the statement if, after having read the statement, they agree with it.

STEP 12:

If the OSHA inspector wants to interview a management employee, ensure that the Response Team and/or an attorney are present for that interview.

STEP 13:

If the OSHA inspector requests any documentation from during the onsite inspection, do not provide him/her with any documentation other than OSHA Logs. Tell the inspector that he/she needs to request any documentation in writing, addressed to the Response Team.

STEP 14:

If you have any questions, comments, or issues regarding the inspection or any citations issued, please contact Matthew Horn at 312-894-3322, mhorn@amundsendavilaw.com

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