

Understanding Oregon OSHA's "programmed inspection for cause"



Additional requirements determining when Oregon OSHA conducts a programmed inspection for cause went into effect Jan. 1, 2024. The requirements were established in [Senate Bill 592](#), which the Oregon Legislature passed in 2023.

What is a programmed inspection for cause?

A programmed inspection for cause is a type of comprehensive inspection. Most comprehensive inspections are also programmed, which means they are based on a schedule that gives priority to industries where injuries or illnesses are most

likely to occur. Programmed inspections for cause are also based on a scheduling list however, the list is formed from businesses that meet one of four conditions and is not based on the industry. A comprehensive inspection is one in which an Oregon OSHA compliance officer looks throughout an entire workplace for hazards that could expose workers to an injury or an illness. The compliance officer will use their professional judgment to assess potential hazards during the inspection, but there may be situations when not all hazards are identified.

What determines when a programmed inspection for cause will happen?

A programmed inspection for cause is triggered by one or more of the following conditions:

1. **When an Oregon OSHA fatality investigation determines that a violation caused or contributed to a fatality.** The inspection for cause would occur within one year of the closing conference date of the inspection associated with the work-related fatality.
2. **When an employer has three or more repeat violations in a 12-month period.** The inspection for cause would occur within one year of the closing conference date of the third repeat violation.



(A repeat violation of a substantially similar violation must occur within a three-year period from when the employer received the citations.)

3. **When an employer has three or more willful violations in a 12-month period.** The inspection for cause would occur within one year of the closing conference date of the third willful violation. (A willful violation does not need to be of a substantially similar violation.)
4. **When an employer has a history of noncompliance and Oregon OSHA determines a comprehensive inspection is necessary for the protection of employees.**

Oregon OSHA encourages employers to use Oregon OSHA consultation services as a proactive approach to identify and resolve safety concerns and hazards. While working with consultation, employers may be exempt from programmed inspections in some cases — for example, if they are under an Oregon OSHA consultation; or they have received a comprehensive safety inspection within the past 36 months; or they have achieved Voluntary Protection Program status (read the complete list of exemptions in [OAR 437-001-0057 Scheduling Inspections](#)). **No exemptions apply to programmed inspections for cause, nor will an employer be notified when a programmed inspection for cause will happen.**

A business may also have some exemptions from a comprehensive inspection by Oregon OSHA enforcement when it has had a comprehensive safety inspection within the past 36 months.

More information

- [OAR 437-001-0057\(8\) Programmed inspection for cause](#) – describes the circumstances triggering a programmed inspection for cause.
- [Program Directive – Programmed Inspection for Cause A-304](#)
- [Determination of Penalties Fact sheet 89](#)
- [Consultation services](#)



Workers

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The Technical Section of Oregon OSHA produced this fact sheet to highlight health and safety programs and rules. The information is intended to explain the rules and provide best practices to employers.