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*The Official Site of Environmental Health & Safety Training®*

# Know Your HAZWOPER Instructor - Why It Matters

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## Know Your HAZWOPER Instructor - Why It Matters

Is your facility about to undergo an OSHA audit? As an employer you have the responsibility for adequately training your employees. But what exactly does this mean? Along with knowing the regulations and fulfilling your legal obligations, you should do your due diligence and research a prospective training company prior to engaging them.

This is a big deal, as you should consider your training provider much like a partner. The certificates issued are only as good as the company who issues them. You should ask yourself the following questions. If we have a compliance issue and it escalates into a legal matter, will the reputation and credentials of our training provider help or hurt us? Did we purchase the best training available for our employees or did we go with the least expensive just to get a certificate for each employee? Are they merely a reseller? Were the certificates signed and sealed by a registered professional?

When a Professional Engineer seals a drawing, you know the design has met certain engineering and legal requirements. The same holds true for a training certificate. When a registered health and safety professional seals a certificate, you know your employees have received good, competent training. Your employees are your most valuable asset.

**The company and instructor providing the training matter and they matter a great deal.**

## OSHA HAZWOPER Regulations

OSHA does not approve any training programs by training companies or employers. OSHA does not directly provide certifications for those aiming to become HAZWOPER Instructors. However, although OSHA does not directly issue these certifications, there are many courses and institutions that provide private training courses for candidates interested in becoming HAZWOPER trainers. There are many trainer certification courses, but it is important to know that OSHA does not recognize any course completion certificate as proof of competency. However, OSHA does recommend different types of training that may help a person become a HAZWOPER instructor.

29 CFR 1910.120 states *"Trainers who teach initial training shall have satisfactorily completed a training course for teaching the subjects they are expected to teach or they shall have the academic credentials and instruction experience necessary to demonstrate a good command of the subject matter of the courses and competent instructional skills"*.

The key word from the regulatory citation listed above is "competent". During a regulatory audit, the competency of your training provider will be one of the first questions raised. Successful companies and employers do not guess at regulatory compliance. They make certain they are in compliance at all times or at least they are

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making strong efforts to be in compliance. It is no different when it comes to health and safety training. **The training received by employees is only as good as the instruction.** Unfortunately, some people believe that a certificate is a certificate and they are in compliance. This is not always the case and companies pay huge fines for training deficiencies.

## Instructor Credentials

The professional credentials of an instructor are direct proof of their mastery of certain Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) topics and fundamentals. The valid common credentials in the marketplace today include, Registered Professional Engineer (PE), Registered Professional Industrial Hygienist (RPIH), Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH) and Certified Hazardous Materials Manager (CHMM).

Certificates should be signed and sealed by the instructor. Because OSHA does not certify HAZWOPER instructors, a registered health and safety professional should sign and seal the certificate. Without this, the certificate does not carry much weight and will not stand up to scrutiny. A student should never sign their own certificate as being proof of satisfactorily completing a training course. We have seen this in the marketplace and we do not see how a regulatory agency could possibly accept these certificates.



Our instructors hold advanced degrees i.e., M.S. or higher related to the EH&S arena (engineering and science). Moreover, our instructors have also taken additional continuing education courses from such well-known institutes as Harvard University. Many of our professionals are also registered engineers, and certified/registered safety professionals in various concentrations. Your certificate from us will be sealed by one of our registered EH&S professionals.

## Instructor Experience

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Instructor experience in the HAZWOPER field is essential to providing your employees with good, competent training. Instructors should have at a minimum 5 years of direct experience relating to HAZWOPER work. The best instructors have in depth knowledge of the regulations, and experience on a wide range of different EH&S subjects. Experience should include work in the following industries: general, construction, chemical, nuclear and possibly working for regulatory agencies.

We are degreed health and safety professionals and former regulators with many years experience working with HAZWOPER sites. We develop training that focuses on safety principles for people and help you to be in compliance as a company. All of our onsite instructors are former U.S. OSHA Training Institute instructors. Our instructors along with information architecture professionals develop our online training. This is how we deliver the best online health and safety training available. Most of our staff has advanced degrees in either engineering or the health and safety profession.

Our instructors have many years experience in the EH&S field - 30 years plus. This includes experience in the following industries: general, construction, chemical, nuclear and working for regulatory agencies.

### Company History and Info

The history of a company is vital in ensuring your employees receive competent training. Has the company been sued recently? Do they advertise in an ethical manner? Remember that certificates are only as good as the company behind them. In a way, you are partnering with this company. How would you feel about your training provider representing you in a court of law? Does your training provider have any formal documentation about their courses or programs from regulatory agencies? A good example of this are the OSHA interpretation letters sent to companies or individuals who make inquiries.

When training with us, you can be comfortable knowing that you are receiving quality training - **OSHA has written a formal interpretation letter to us accepting our HAZWOPER Hands-on Simulator®** when used in conjunction with site-specific training which is always required for any HAZWOPER course, whether online or generic/public seminar classroom training.

### Training Scope and Breadth

Look for the best courses you can find. Depending on the provider, the courses also tend to vary. What you want is an in-depth course that complies with the OSHA standards and requirements. Some companies only scratch the surface of the required topics and do not provide in-depth information. This is usually associated with the low

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price discount HAZWOPER courses. You generally get what you pay for and the HAZWOPER training industry is no exception. Be sure to get good, comprehensive training for your employees that fulfill the OSHA regulations - not just training that merely mentions a topic and provides very little detailed information.

If you are aiming on taking a classroom course, then make sure they offer practical field training as well.

## Regulatory Scrutiny

It is always advisable to only purchase training that fulfills the OSHA regulations. During an audit it is not uncommon for a regulatory official to ask your employees questions about the training and what was covered. Be sure that your employees receive the best training possible. Also, be sure your training records are located in one centralized location. Being organized gives the regulatory official an impression that you take training seriously and you foster an effective health and safety culture.

## Professional Liability Insurance

Always ask your training provider for proof of their professional liability insurance. Many of the online providers today are merely resellers, have no insurance and do not offer access to a qualified instructor. Remember, the training you receive is only as good as the training provider who offers the training.

## Certificates

OSHA HAZWOPER training regulations require that a qualified instructor sign the certificate and that the certificate has a certification number. The HAZWOPER certification is a joint responsibility between the employer and the instructor. OSHA holds employers accountable for adequately training their employees. Instructors are responsible for conducting the training and signing the certificates.

Because the OSHA HAZWOPER regulation require instructors who are competent, we believe the certificates should also be sealed by a registered EH&S professional. You want to make sure your employees receive good, competent training and that your company will stand up to any kind of scrutiny be it from a regulatory agency.

## Questions

Please call us at 1.888.877.7130 to ask any questions or to receive additional information.