

Keeping OSHA Training Courses Legitimate

DARRYL C. HILL, CSP, VICE PRESENT OF SAFETY AND HEALTH FOR ABB INC., IS AN AUTHORIZED OSHA CONSTRUCTION SAFETY COURSE TRAINER.

In this interview, Darryl Hill explains how he ensures that the OSHA 10- and 30-hour courses he teaches reflect the latest industry standards and requirements and meet students' needs. He also offers his suggestions for preventing the proliferation of bogus OSHA construction safety courses and forged/fraudulent certificate cards.



Blueprints: Please provide a brief description of your professional background and of your position at ABB Inc.

Darryl Hill: I have been employed in the safety profession for almost 25 years. I hold B.S. and M.S. degrees in occupational safety and hazardous waste management, respectively. Currently, I am responsible for occupational safety and health for ABB North America Operations. This includes Canada, Mexico, the U.S. and Central America.

Blueprints: You are an authorized OSHA construction safety course trainer. What procedure did you follow to become an authorized trainer?

DH: I followed the standard OSHA outreach instructor process. I completed two 1-week courses: con-

struction safety and health standards, and construction safety and health standards trainer.

Blueprints: How do you ensure that the OSHA 10- and 30-hour courses you teach reflect the latest industry standards and requirements and also meet students' needs?

DH: First, I ensure that I meet OSHA outreach instructor requirements and cover the necessary subjects based on the time parameter requirements. Subsequently, it is important that I keep abreast of the latest standards via OSHA's website (<http://www.osha.gov>) and various safety and health journals and publications.

Also, I periodically attend professional development courses and conferences to ensure that I am aware of not only the current standards, but also industry best practices. It is important that I deliver courses consistent with ANSI/ASSE Z490.1-2001, Criteria for Accepted Practices in SH&E Training, as well as with safety training methods and adult learning theory, to meet student learning needs.

Blueprints: How have students responded to your courses? Are they generally comfortable with the amount of time it takes to cover the materials? Have they offered any suggestions for improving the courses' structure or for updating the learning objectives?

DH: Student/attendee evaluations help ensure that I focus on continuous improvement. Based on these evaluations and ongoing student feedback, course ratings have been favorable. Furthermore, course evaluations have improved, which is what an instructor should expect in the spirit of continuous improvement.

Students are generally comfortable with the amount of time allocated to cover the material. Of course, students sometimes prefer that certain subjects are covered more or less than other subjects, and each course is different based on the audience and the experience of students/attendees.

They must understand that this is a general introductory course. If additional information is necessary, it should be part of their employer training plan.

Learning objectives are an important element in the training process. They should provide students with clear expectations of what they can learn from the course. Unfavorable course evaluations indicate that the

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instructor should revisit course learning objectives.

Blueprints: *New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg has called on the federal government to crack down on bogus OSHA construction safety courses. This comes after a recent New York Daily News investigative report revealed that some OSHA 10-hour courses in the New York City area are conducted in less than half that time and also*

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after a record number of construction deaths and injuries occurred in New York City within the last year. As an authorized OSHA trainer, how do you respond to this problem? What do you believe OSHA can do to better control how construction safety courses are taught?

DH: If evidence shows that OSHA construction safety courses

do not meet expectations and OSHA's requirements, then each case should be assessed accordingly. Some flexibility is allowed in these courses, but presenting the material in less than half the time is a concern. The amount of time needed to teach the course is based on several factors, including the number of questions and students, attendee and instructor experience and student needs.

Periodic course evaluation audits may be a process to assist in how construction safety courses are taught. However, due to the number of courses and instructors teaching these courses, it would be an administrative challenge to control how construction safety courses are taught.

Blueprints: *The reporters also noted that fake OSHA 10- and 30-*

hour certificate cards are routinely sold in the New York City area. How do you believe OSHA can best prevent the circulation of forged/fraudulent certificate cards, and how can students ensure that the certificate cards they receive are authentic?

DH: OSHA control of forged/fraudulent certificate cards would be difficult at best. However, similar to an approach used by many companies, maybe a hotline can be established where someone could report suspected abuse.

Blueprints: *Some have proposed that OSHA replace instructor-led 10- and 30-hour courses with online training that would require students to complete lessons and pass exams. Others have suggested that online training would also provide better tracking of students' progress. Based on your experience, do you believe the courses should be completely online, instructor-led or a combination of both?*

DH: I believe online training has its place if delivered and executed properly. Online safety training may present its own challenges, such as computer access capability, costs, etc. A combination of online and instructor-led courses is a feasible approach, as it allows establishments to implement the approach that best fits their infrastructure and needs. I am always skeptical of a one-size-fits-all approach.

Blueprints: *What do you think is causing the recent increase in bogus OSHA construction safety courses and fake certification cards in the New York City area? Are other major cities experiencing similar problems?*

DH: I am unaware of other cities having problems, but I would be sur-

prised if this issue is limited to the New York City area. The increase in bogus OSHA construction safety courses and fake certificate cards could be a result of the increased requirement to possess the 10- and 30-hour cards. Increased demand to possess the OSHA card could result in the aforementioned issues.

Blueprints: *How can those in need of OSHA 10- or 30-hour construction safety training ensure that they register for a legitimate and reputable course?*

DH: I suggest that the student/company do a little homework and determine who will conduct the course and ensure that course requirements meet OSHA guidelines.

Blueprints: *What advice do you have for those who wish to become authorized OSHA trainers but do not want to be tied to any negative publicity?*

DH: Follow up with the appropriate OSHA training institute, OSHA office, etc. While this issue has been raised in the public arena, I suspect that the overwhelming majority of OSHA trainers do an excellent job of fulfilling the obligations and expectations for teaching the 10- and 30-hour course. ☺

Darryl C. Hill, CSP, is vice president of safety and health for ABB Inc., ASSE President-Elect and a professional member of ASSE's Greater Detroit Chapter. Hill has nearly 25 years' safety experience and holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in occupational safety and hazardous waste management, respectively.

OSHA Outreach Training Program

OSHA's outreach training program is a voluntary program to train workers in the basics of safety and health hazard recognition and prevention. OSHA authorizes trainers who complete construction and general industry train-the-trainer courses to conduct occupational safety and health classes for workers. For additional information regarding the program guidelines, visit http://www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/construction_generalindustry/construction.pdf.