

## Common Competent Person Designations

The following is a list of some of the common standards, but not all, that require a Competent Person.

- Fall Protection – 1910.140, 1926.500
- Trenching & Excavation – 1926 Subpart P
- Scaffolding – 1926 Subpart L
- Respirable Crystalline Silica – 1926 Subpart Z
- Powered Industrial Trucks – 1910.178
- Powered Platforms for Building Maintenance – 1910.66
- Cranes and Derricks – 1926.550
- Ladders – 1926.1053

## **OSHA Approved Competent Person Training!!!!**

There are a lot of websites that advertise online training courses that “certify participants as OSHA competent persons.” Steer clear! OSHA does not authorize anyone to be a Competent Person. That must come from your employer!



OSHA uses the term “Competent Person” in many of its standards and documents. At first glance, understanding what a Competent Person (CP) is seems pretty straightforward. However, in the eyes of OSHA, being a CP for a subject does not rely solely on your experience, expertise, or knowledge. It’s a bit more involved than that.

OSHA defines the CP as “one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.”

Notice the part that states, “authorization to take prompt corrective measures...”. This requisite is the key. A person may have all of the experience, knowledge, and expertise in the world on a subject, for example, fall protection, but if they are not authorized to make corrective changes, they are not the Competent Person.

So, where does that authorization come from? Your employer.

Your employer should determine if your scope of knowledge, experience, and training is sufficient for them to grant you the authority to make decisions and take actions necessary to remedy potentially hazardous situations.

Remember, with great power (or in this case, authorization) comes great responsibility.

## The Competent Person

—  
*Either You Are,  
or You Aren't*

### Competent Person – Responsibilities

Some standards add additional requirements that must be met to be considered the Competent Person for that subject. However, all Competent Persons share similar duties and responsibilities such as:

- Staying up to date on the best practices for the Competent Person’s subject
- Ensuring that best practices are implemented on the job
- Thoroughly understanding the OSHA standards that pertain to their Competent Person designation
- Stopping work when corrective actions need to be made

Sometimes employers will train the entire staff, designate them all as competent, and then set policy so that all employees can make changes. While this allows employees the leeway to make and own their safety decisions, employers have to be careful. If everyone is a CP, then no one is THE Competent Person. When OSHA requires a Competent Person, they mean a designated individual. Only one person can have the authority to make final decisions.

Finally, if that designated person has to call and ask for permission to make a change, then they do not have the authority needed,