

# QUESTIONS THAT AN OSHA INSPECTOR MAY ASK YOU ABOUT LASER SAFETY

FACT SHEET



The following are some of the questions that an OSHA inspector may ask during an inspection of workplaces at which lasers are used. These questions are designed to help OSHA determine whether an employer has an adequate laser safety program. Employers and workers can review these questions and rationales to help improve their laser safety programs.

**Question 1: Who is the Laser Safety Officer (LSO)?**

**Rationale:** Required by ANSI Z136.1 (Safe Use of Lasers) for class 3B and 4 laser systems. You cannot have an effective laser safety program if there is not a properly trained LSO to oversee it.

**Question 2: What classes of laser(s) are used?**

**Rationale:** Sets the level of controls that need to be in place according to ANSI Z136.1.

**Question 3: Do you have a Laser Safety Program in place? Can you show me?**

**Rationale:** Required by ANSI Z136.1 for class 3B and 4 laser systems. A documented program indicates thought has been given to laser safety and sets the program's requirements.

**Question 4: Do you have any guidance documents on laser safety, such as a copy of ANSI Z136.1, "Safe Use of Lasers" standard?**

**Rationale:** This question helps the compliance officer to understand the source of information you might use or rely on in setting up your own program. The ANSI document is considered by many to provide comprehensive information on the core of any laser safety program.

**Question 5: What types of lasers do you have and what are they used for?**

**Rationale:** This gives the compliance officer an indication of program awareness. If the employer doesn't know, it is an indication of poor training.

**Question 6: Do you know where all the lasers are? Can you show me the inventory list?**

**Rationale:** Gives indication of control of program. Lasers tend to move around and they need to be tracked.

**Question 7: Do you require laser eye protection? If so, is it being used?**

**Rationale:** This is an indication of awareness and training. Ask to see eyewear and check that it is properly marked with optical density (OD) and wavelength. Also check to see if it is properly stored. As with any form of PPE, it needs to be in working condition.

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Question 8: Have employees been given training? Can you show me the training records?

Rationale: Requirement of ANSI Z136.1.

Question 9: Can you show me your laser warning signs? Are they accurate and ANSI compliant? Are they posted correctly?

Rationale: Signage is part of alerting employees that they are entering a laser controlled area. They need to be accurate and ANSI compliant. A "Laser in Use" sign is not sufficient information.

Question 10: Are entryway access control measures in place such as interlocks or visual indicators?

Rationale: Only authorized personnel should have access to laser operation areas.

Question 11: Do you have a procedure in place for responding to laser accidents?

Rationale: As with any type of accident, there needs to be a response plan.

Question 12: If running more than one shift, how are laser safety concerns dealt with?

Rationale: It is important that second and third shift employees have the same training as first shift.

Question 13: Are all the lasers in use certified?

Rationale: Requirement of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH). All lasers manufactured in the U.S. or imported into the U.S. must be certified by the manufacturer to comply with the federal standard. This means that all lasers must have a hazard class label. Some prototype lasers may not be certified if built and used by the people who created the laser. However, even these lasers should be classified by the builders of the prototype so that the appropriate hazard controls can be implemented to protect the employees from laser radiation.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace and workers have rights. OSHA can help answer questions or concerns from employers and workers. OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. For more information, contact your regional or area OSHA office, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

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