

Competent/Qualified Person

Fall Protection

Designate competent persons and qualified persons

Many of Oregon OSHA's construction rules refer to *competent* persons and *qualified* persons. Federal OSHA created these terms to designate those who can evaluate hazardous conditions and mechanical systems, inspect equipment, and train others to work safely.

Who can be a competent or qualified person? OSHA provides the following definitions:

Competent person. "One who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them." [1926.32(f)]

Subdivision R (*Steel Erection*) also adds the following: "In Oregon, a competent person is considered to be someone with equivalent skills as a qualified person in identifying existing and potential hazards in the workplace, while also being authorized by the employer or employer's representative to take immediate corrective action to control or eliminate hazards."

Qualified person. "One who, by possession of a recognized degree, certificate, or professional standing, or by extensive knowledge, training, and experience, has successfully demonstrated their ability to solve or resolve problems relating to the subject matter, the work, or the project." [1926.32(m)]

Federal OSHA doesn't provide specifics for determining who can assume these roles. The following guidelines may help:

- Know the Oregon OSHA rules that apply to your workplace. The rules will tell you if you need to designate a competent or a qualified person.
- If an Oregon OSHA rule requires a competent person or qualified person, note the person's duties and responsibilities.
- If an Oregon OSHA rule requires a competent person, that person must have the authority to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate hazards.
- Determine the knowledge, training, and experience the person needs to meet the rule's requirements.
- Designate a person whose knowledge, training, and experience meet the rule's requirements.

Duties and responsibilities of competent and qualified persons

The competent person

- Serves as the monitor in a safety-monitoring system, is responsible for recognizing hazards that cause falls, and warns workers about hazards
- Determines whether safety nets meet Subdivision M requirements
- Inspects a personal fall-arrest system after it arrests a fall and determines if the system is damaged
- Evaluates any alteration in a personal fall-arrest system and determines if it is safe to use
- Trains employees how to recognize fall hazards and follow safety procedures

The qualified person

- Supervises design, installation, and use of horizontal lifeline systems to ensure that they can maintain a safety factor of at least two — twice the impact of a worker free-falling six feet
- Supervises design, installation, and use of personal fall-restraint anchorages
- Supervises design, installation, and use of personal fall-arrest anchorages

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