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Posted on: March 13, 2025If your business is aiming for a government contract, youve likely come across the term EM 385-1-1. This safety manual isnt just another set of rules to follow - its actually a critical requirement for many projects involving the Department of Defense or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. From creating safety plans to training your workforce, compliance with EM 385 ensures a safer, more efficient worksite. In this blog, well break down what you need to know about EM 385 and how it impacts government contracts. What Is EM 385-1-1? EM-385 is the code for theUS Corps of Engineers' safety and health requirements, which are developed and regularly updated and are intended to regulate Department of Defense projects. EM 385 closely resembles the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which is not surprising given that both rules are intended to enhance worker health and safety. However, on government or military construction projects, theregulations of the Corps of Engineers take precedence over OSHA requirements. Anyone working on government or military projects must understand and adhere to these safety rules. What Is EM 385 Training? EM 385-1-1 Training is designed to educate workers, supervisors, and safety professionals about the safety requirements outlined in the manual. This training ensures that individuals working on USACE projects are aware of potential hazards, safety procedures, and emergency response plans. Different levels of EM 385-1-1 training are available: 16-hour course: Basic level training for workers. 24-hour course: Intermediate level training for supervisors and managers. 40-hour course: Advanced level training for safety professionals and those responsible for developing and implementing safety programs. 8-hour course: Refresher training to satisfy annual requirements for Site Safety Health Officers (SSHOs).By completing EM 385-1-1 training, individuals can help prevent accidents, injuries, and fatalities on USACE projects. Key Differences Between EM 385 and OSHA Standards While both EM 385 and OSHA aim to ensure workplace safety, there are some key differences between the two: Scope and Application: OSHA: Applies to most private sector workplaces in the United States, including construction sites. EM 385: Specifically applies to projects undertaken by or for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).Stringency of Standards: EM 385: Generally considered more stringent than OSHA, especially regarding planning, documentation, inspections, and safety management. It often requires more detailed safety plans and procedures. OSHA: While OSHA standards are comprehensive, they may be less specific in certain areas compared to EM 385. Training Requirements: EM 385: Mandates more rigorous training requirements, often including specialized training for specific tasks and hazards. OSHA: While OSHA has its own training requirements, they are often less comprehensive than those required by EM 385. Enforcement: OSHA: Enforced by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), a federal agency. EM 385: Enforced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which can impose penalties for non-compliance. Focus Areas: OSHA: Covers a wide range of industries and hazards, including general industry, construction, maritime, and specific industries like agriculture. EM 385: Primarily focuses on construction and engineering projects, with a strong emphasis on safety in hazardous environments. In essence, while both EM 385 and OSHA share the common goal of workplace safety, EM 385 often imposes more stringent requirements and a higher level of scrutiny on projects undertaken by or for the USACE. USACE project employees should be aware of these differences and to comply with the specific requirements of EM 385 to ensure a safe working environment. How Does EM 385 Impact Government Contracts? Most contractors, despite their qualifications and years of experience, are not able to bid on or manage government construction contracts. This is because most contractors are untrained in how to manage the documentation process and regulatory requirements for a government contract. A government construction contract requires contractors to meet specific federal and state criteria. In order to be qualified to handle the contract, a contractor must also pass specific safety, quality, and environmental compliance courses. That is where EM 385-1-1 comes in. EM 385-1-1 regulates the construction safety and health standards for government or military contracts. How EM 385-1-1 Can Benefit You If you want to strengthen your safety credentials by working on government or military construction projects, start training as soon as possible. EM 385 training prepares you to successfully bid on government construction projects. Your offer will be rejected if it does notinclude a site-specific safety planthat meets all EM 385-1-1 requirements. Consequences of Non-Compliance with EM 385 Standards Non-compliance with EM 385 standards can lead to a variety of serious consequences, including: Legal and Contractual Penalties: Contract Termination: The contracting officer may terminate the contract if non-compliance poses a significant safety risk. Financial Penalties: Contractors may face financial penalties of up to $2,000 per penalty per day. Legal Liability: Not following EM 385 Standards can lead to legal liability, including lawsuits from injured workers or damaged property. Safety and Health Risks: Injuries and Fatalities: Non-compliance can increase the risk of accidents, injuries, and fatalities on the job site. Property Damage: Failing to comply with EM 385 Standards can lead to property damage, including damage to equipment, structures, and the environment. Environmental Damage: Non-compliance with environmental safety standards can result in significant environmental damage.Reputational Damage: Loss of Trust: Non-compliance can damage the contractor's reputation and erode trust with the government and other stakeholders. Difficulty in Future Contracts: Contractors with a history of non-compliance may have difficulty securing future contracts.Operational Delays: Work Stoppages: Violations can lead to work stoppages and delays, which can increase project costs and timelines. Increased Oversight: Non-compliant contractors may face increased oversight and inspections, which can further delay projects.To lower these risks, its important to prioritize safety and compliance with EM 385 standards. This includes implementing strict safety programs, offering comprehensive training, conducting regular safety inspections, and addressing safety concerns quickly. Get Started on EM 385-1-1 Training Today Compliance with an onlineEM 385-1-1 courseis required for all individuals working on government or military contracts, whether youre a contractor or a supervisor. OSHA.com has four training hour options available. An eight-hour, sixteen-hour, twenty-four-hour, and forty-hour course. Each of the four contains safety information that adheres to the EM 385-1-1 requirements in more depth than the previous The16-hourand24-hourcourses are required for contractors and personnel on building projects while the40-hourtraining is required for managers and supervisors and offers specific instructions for applying health and safety regulations. Our8-houroption is a refresher course that should be completed annually. Our training coursesteach workers and supervisors everything you need to know about the EM 385-1-1 safety manual. It addresses key topics such as developing safety procedures, managing buildings and vehicles, and protecting employees in heights and confined areas. The course is comprehensive and user-friendly, available in our online training catalog.Head to our websiteto register today! If you're involved in construction projects with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or working on government contracts, understanding and obtaining EM 385-1-1 certification is essential for complying with OSHA regulations and ensuring a safe workplace environment. Let's delve into what EM 385-1-1 certification entails and why it's vital for professionals in this industry. What is EM 385-1-1? The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has its own safety and health requirements that apply to all Corps of Engineers activities and operations. EM 385-1-1 is theSafety and Health Requirements Manual, whichlays outall these requirements. "EM" stands for "Engineering Manual." Is EM 385 Training the Same as OSHA Training? Both OSHA and EM 385 programs cover similar topics and often require similar safety measures. In fact, EM 385-1-1 incorporates many OSHA standards by reference. However, USACE regulations tend to be more involved than OSHA Construction standards. Weve talked before about how OSHA standards work differently for the military. EM 385-1-1 is a big part of that difference. How is EM 385-1-1 Different from OSHA Standards? Some of the technical requirements of EM 385-1-1 are more stringent than 29 CFR 1926. One example is fall standards. While OSHA allows provisions for self-rescue in the event of a fall, EM 385 requires employers to provide prompt rescue and maintain a written Fall Rescue Plan. (In case you're wondering which section of the EM 385-1-1 outlines the fall protection requirements, you can find them under Section 21). However, the biggest difference between OSHA and USACE safety regulations is that OSHA leaves the administration and management of safety and health fairly open, while EM 385-1-1 dictates a lot of the administrative routine to actively engage crews in their safety and health program. For example, employers are required to keep a written Accident Prevention Plan (APP). They're also required to create anActivity Hazard Analysis (AHA)for each job being performed. It's not all paperwork, either. EM 385-1-1 requires point persons and lays out routines to ensure that the written plans are followed. The USACE standards create a full-time dedicated position known as a Site Safety Health Officer (SSHO) that oversees compliance with EM 385-1-1 and ensures safe and healthful working conditions on-site. The SSHO helps in both the planning and paperwork, but also through on-site supervision and hazard correction. EM 385-1-1 SSHO requirements include mandatory coverage when there are multiple sites, multiple shifts, or absences of a certain length. Essentially, someone needs to actively monitor safety at all times. EM 385 also requires "frequent and regular inspections of the job sites, materials, and equipment." This creates a structure for catching unaddressed hazards or safety violations and then correcting them. Finally, EM 385-1-1 has more thorough requirements for safety training. Workers must all receive an initial safety indoctrination, which is similar to OSHA's (more vaguely worded) requirement. In contrast to OSHA, specificongoing safety discussionsare mandatory for federal projects, along with any necessary training. There's even a prescribed frequency at least once a week for all workers. The supervisors and foremen who give the weekly safety talks are required to meet at least once a month for their own discussion. The regs require that all safety meetings be documented, including attendance and content. Content must be relevant to the specific job, and contractors have to review both past activities and any plans for new or changed operations. In other words, contractors can't just pull up generic safety talks and check a box. Who Needs EM 385 Training? EM 385 training (sometimes referred to as EM 385 certification) is mandatory for anyone who works on military and federally funded contracts or projects, including contractors and military or government employees expected to enforce or comply with EM 385-1-1. For example, if you're a contractor working on a military installation or if you're assisting on an Army Corps project, you need the right kind of EM 385-1-1certification. Some state and local projects also rely on the EM 385 model, either because the project is partially funded with federal dollars or because it's an easy way to reduce liability without reinventing the wheel. Which EM 385 Training Do You Need? There are several EM 385-1-1 courses to choose from. They vary in length, and which one you need depends on your role. Most workers need the16-hour EM 385 Training. This is an orientation that covers the safety standards you'll need to comply with on a military or government project. Anyone without supervisory duties should take the 16-hour course. Collateral Duty Safety Officers (CDSOs) need to complete the24-hour EM 385 Training. This is the appropriate training for managers, supervisors, and crew leaders. "Collateral Duty" means you have safety responsibilities that aren't your primary job. The Site Safety Health Officer (SSHO) on a military contract or project needs an initial40-hour EM 385 Training, followed by an annual8-hour EM 385 Refresher Training. Many military and government contractors are also required to have an up-to-dateOSHA 30card. How Long is EM 385 Certification Good For? Technically speaking, EM 385 certification doesn't expire. In other words, there's no mandatory refresher period in the EM 385 regulations for most government contract workers. There are, however, official refreshers or continuing education requirements for designated officers, like CDSOs and SSHOs. Additionally, your employer may require periodic refreshers for everyone. Government contractors can get in big trouble if EM 385-1-1 standards aren't being followed as required, so they want to make sure everyone has EM 385 training fresh on their minds. Check with them to see what the expectations are for refreshers and re-training. Get EM 385-1-1 Certification Online EM 385-1-1 allows for online safety and health training as long as you're able to ask questions of the instructor by phone or chat. As a long-time OSHA-authorized training provider with a long history of excellent service, our online courses meet EM 385-1-1 requirements. You can completeEM 385 certification(and update yourDOL card) at your own pace and on your own schedule from anywhere with an internet connection. Get started by enrolling today! If you're involved in construction projects with the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or working on government contracts, understanding and obtaining EM 385-1-1 certification is essential for complying with OSHA regulations and ensuring a safe workplace environment. Let's delve into what EM 385-1-1 certification entails and why it's vital for professionals in this industry. What is EM 385-1-1? The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has its own safety and health requirements that apply to all Corps of Engineers activities and operations. EM 385-1-1 is theSafety and Health Requirements Manual, whichlays outall these requirements. "EM" stands for "Engineering Manual." Is EM 385 Training the Same as OSHA Training? Both OSHA and EM 385 programs cover similar topics and often require similar safety measures. 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You can completeEM 385 certification(and update yourDOL card) at your own pace and on your own schedule from anywhere with an internet connection. Get started by enrolling today! Some people feel anxious at the thought of having to take tests, quizzes and assessments in order to get their EM 385 certification. An EM385 If you work on military projects as a Site Safety Health Officer (SSHO), you know how important it is to follow the safety and health The Site Safety and Health Officer (SSHO) has several key responsibilities related to the safety and occupational health (SOH) program at a project site. These duties include developing, implementing, and managing the contractors SOH program. The SSHO is also responsible for conducting inspections, and developing Activity Hazard Analyses (AHAs). A crucial aspect of their role [] EM385 1-1: Duties of a Site Safety and Health Officer (SSHO) Read More Notice This article is for informational purposes only. em385.us is not the final determiner of any project specific requirements or training, which are specific to each project, contractor and role and must be determined in line with USACE and NAVFAC requirements. This article provides a summary of the different roles covered by the EM 385 EM385 Roles and Required Training Explained Read More Taking EM 385-1-1 training is of paramount importance for any contractor undertaking work under a USACE contract. The EM 385-1-1 manual serves as the definitive guide for safety and occupational health requirements on these projects, and a thorough understanding of its contents is not merely advisable but essential for successful and compliant project execution. 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This chapter mandates the development, management, and implementation of a comprehensive Safety and Occupational Health (SOH) program by contractors, forming EM 385 1-1 Chapter 2: Quick Reference Guide Read More Chapter 1 of the EM 385-1-1 Engineers Manual is titled Safety and Occupational Health Program Management for United States Army Corps of Engineers Personnel. This chapter establishes the fundamental requirements for the Safety and Occupational Health (SOH) program within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This chapters primary objective is to provide overall programmatic EM 385 1-1 Chapter 1: Quick Reference Guide Read More Understanding the ins and outs of safety training, particularly in the context of government projects, is very important for professionals planning to bid on DOD and related projects. The EM 385-1-1 training is required to ensure that safety standards are upheld, ultimately protecting both workers and the integrity of the projects themselves. 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An EM385 test or quiz is a required component of any training and certification program, but it should not be something to be worried about after all, you will be doing EM 385 Training Practice Test Read More The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has released a new version of the EM 385-1-1 manual for 2024. The last official release was in 2014, so there are some quite significant updates. This article will run through the key changes you must be aware of, ensuring you stay compliant and up-to-date with the latest EM 385-1-1 2024 Manual Update: What You Need To Know Read More A lot of people get confused on the differences between EM385 1-1 training and OSHA 30 Hour training. This is understandable as there is significant overlap in the curriculum of these training programs. Not only that, there are also certain roles that require both EM385 training and OSHA 30 hour certification in order to be EM385 Training Vs OSHA 30 Hour Differences Explained Read More What is EM385 Training and why do I need it? According to the EM 385-1-1, Safety and Health Requirements Manual, yourself and all employees or contractors who will be present on the worksite will need to complete different levels of EM 385 training depending on your roles and responsibilities. EM385 training requirements by role and Understanding the Different EM385 training types Read More If you are a contractor or an employee working on military projects, you may have heard of EM 385-1-1 training. But what is it and why do you need it? Here is a brief overview of what EM 385-1-1 training is, what it covers, and how you can get it online. What is EM 385-1-1 EM 385-1-1 16 Hour Training Explained Read More If you work on military projects as a Site Safety Health Officer (SSHO), you know how important it is to follow the safety and health standards outlined in the EM 385-1-1 manual. This manual, released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), covers everything from hazard identification and prevention to accident reporting and investigation. Why You Need EM385 Refresher Training Read More EM 385 training is a type of online safety training that covers the regulations and guidelines outlined in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Health Manual, also known as the EM 385-1-1 Manual. This manual contains the safety and health requirements for construction contract work related to military or government projects. EM 385 EM 385 Training: What It Is and How to Get It Online Read More If you are a contractor, subcontractor, or employee working on a federal construction project, you may be required to complete the EM385 40 hour training course. This course is designed to provide you with the knowledge and skills to comply with the safety and health requirements of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Safety EM385 40 Hour Training: What You Need to Know Read More The first thing to note is that many EM 385 requirements closely parallel OSHA requirements, but with some notable differences. Differences include EM385 requirements for a written site-specific plans and the development of activity hazard analyses for various different activities. If you have prevously developed these under the now superseded EM385 2014 Manual standard you EM 385: Safety on DoD Construction Projects 2024 Read More If you are a contractor planning to pursue any government contracts, EM 385 training is essential for compliance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Safety and Health Requirements Manual. This is the standard used by contracting officers and project managers who inspect or oversee your work. In ourEM 385 training online course, you will EM385-1-1 Training Requirements Overview Read More Accessing a confined space may be a part of industrial activity and may be performed for a variety of purposes. It is normally done to conduct essential activities like inspections, reconstruction, or maintenance. However, in a working environment, a confined space is one of the physical hazards that poses a threat to the employees. Workplaces OSHA Confined Spaces Training Overview Read More Chapter 3 of EM 385-1-1 focuses on first aid and medical requirements, outlining the necessary provisions for ensuring the health and safety of personnel in Its almost the end of another year, and as the industry takes a well deserved break for a few days it may be a good If you are a contractor planning to pursue any government contracts, EM 385 training is essential for compliance with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers The first thing to note is that many EM 385 requirements closely parallel OSHA requirements, but with some notable differences. Differences include EM385 requirements for

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