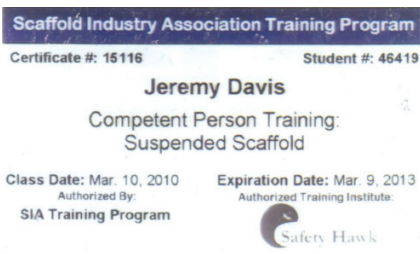




# TOOLBOX TALK



## COMPETENT PERSON AS DEFINED BY OSHA



### Example of competent person course completion card.

has authorization by the employer to stop work and take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.

This term is used in a number of OSHA's construction standards. For example, the scaffolding standard in 1926.451(f) (3) requires that "scaffolds and scaffold components shall be inspected for visible defects by a competent person before each work shift, and after any occurrence which could affect a scaffold's structural integrity." Another example is OSHA's requirement that trenches be inspected by a competent person prior to worker entry to ensure elimination of excavation hazards.

Employers need to **train** and **identify** who is considered to be "competent" in their respective line of work, and then inform all employees who is the "competent" person(s) on the job. Just because an employee is considered to be competent in one line of work does not make them competent in all areas of a job.

OSHA defines a competent person 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

A competent person needs:

- Training
- Experience
- Knowledge of the applicable standards
- To have the ability to identify hazards
- To have authority to take prompt action to eliminate the hazard

Under 1926.20(b), competent persons are also required to make frequent and regular inspections of the job site, materials, and equipment. In addition, the competent person needs to know how to conduct inspections and keep good records of their results.

Employers who provide employees with ID badges should designate on the badge if an employee is considered to be competent and in what areas they are considered to be so. For example "aerial lifts and suspended scaffolding." An employer is within their right to designate an employee as a competent person without sending that employee to a third party as long as a formal assessment and / or training was done in house (and documented).

Often outside companies that offer training seminars provide wallet sized cards as proof of training. An example of a competent person course completion card is shown above. All employees should have these on their person. Please note that successful completion of a course does not by itself necessarily establish a person as a competent person.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. A competent person is one who:
  - a) Is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards
  - b) Identifies if working conditions are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees
  - c) Has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate hazards
  - d) All of the above**
  
2. What is necessary for one to be recognized as being a competent person?
  - a) Training and experience
  - b) Authority to take corrective action
  - c) Designated to be a competent person by employer
  - d) To have the ability to report on the weather and indicate if rain or snow are in the forecast
  - e) A, B & C only**

3. An employee should carry credentials stating they are a competent person in a specific type of work
  - a) True**
  - b) False
  
4. A competent person is required to make frequent and regular inspections of the job site, materials, and equipment for safe use
  - a) True**
  - b) False



**OSHA Standard**  
No. 29 CFR 1926  
Competent Person

|                |           |
|----------------|-----------|
| Talk Given By: | Date:     |
| Company Name:  | Location: |
| Printed Name   | Signature |
|                |           |
|                |           |
|                |           |
|                |           |
|                |           |

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).

Through the OSHA and SWR Institute Alliance, the SWR Institute developed this toolbox talk for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor.

**COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

Copyright ©2022 by the Sealant, Waterproofing & Restoration Institute. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.