

The Dos & Don'ts of dealing with inspections

You've got a busy day at work planned. All your staff are in and the plant and machinery are operating as they should. It's going to be a great day... then an inspector shows up for an unannounced inspection.

It is easy to get frustrated in this situation. It's not just the lost time and productivity, but the inspection process can be an uncomfortable experience, particularly when everything is not as it should be.

Keeping some easy Dos and Don'ts in mind can prevent these frustrations from boiling over, keep the inspection process amicable and professional and protect your business interests.

The Dos

- **Treat the inspection as a priority** – Cancel those meetings and appointments. If an inspector has shown up at your place of business, then it should be treated seriously and prioritised accordingly. While this may be a short-term inconvenience, it will be time well spent, particularly if issues requiring your attention are identified during the inspection.
- **Have the inspector identify them self** – Inspectors undertaking their duties should have some form of identification, particularly if they are able to exercise powers (e.g. entry, photography and sampling without consent). If you haven't dealt with the inspectors before, ask them to produce this identification. This serves two purposes: you can deal with the inspector on a first name basis and if you feel wronged by the inspection, you can identify the inspector concerned.
- **Be respectful and courteous** – Like any employee, an inspector has the right to do their job without harassment. Also, disrespectful or harassing behaviour could backfire. The inspector may take it personally and resolve to only leave your premises after issuing a fine.
- **Ask questions** – You don't have to be a passive observer of the inspection. If you are unsure what the inspector is doing, ask. At the end of the inspection, make sure you ask, "Is there anything you need me to do as a result of this inspection?"

- **Make a record of the inspection** – The inspector will be making a detailed record of the inspection: you should too. As a minimum, you should record the names of the people present, the time the inspection began and ended and what happened during the inspection. These notes will be extremely useful if your recollection of what happened is different to the inspector

The Don'ts

- **Be threatening or aggressive** – One of the most significant WHS risks for inspectors is being confronted by threatening or aggressive people. Inspectors will have well established procedures to deal with these situations. This could include actions such as undertaking inspections while accompanied by the Police.
- **Be obstructive** – Inspectors do not mind getting paid for you to waste their time. They will stay until their job is complete, so why waste your valuable time trying to delay the inevitable.
- **Mislead or lie to the inspector** – Lies (even the little ones) have a habit of being revealed sooner or later. This can be extremely damaging to your corporate reputation with the regulator and result in you being deemed a higher risk of non-compliance.
- **Offer "gifts"** – All regulatory agencies have very strict policies on dealing with gifts and bribes which are drilled into inspectors. If a "gift" is offered, the inspector is duty bound to report it, which can open up a range of troubles far beyond anything that an inspection may make.

Who can I talk to help me with inspections?

Get in touch with JS Regulatory Services. We love making regulation work best, for everyone.



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