

Oregon SHARP Alliance

By Aaron Corvin

Improving workplace safety and health isn't the kind of project you want to shoulder alone.

It's an ongoing endeavor that calls for teamwork.

Just ask the [Oregon SHARP Alliance](#).

The nonprofit group understands the value of bringing people, employers, and organizations together to share knowledge and offer guidance – all in the name of making job sites safer and healthier for workers.

"It comes down to mentoring and networking," said Mark Hurliman, VPP/SHARP program manager for Oregon OSHA, who serves as OSHA's liaison to the alliance. "It's an opportunity for companies to get together and meet other likeminded companies and start sharing ideas."

Launched in 2000, the alliance encompasses employers who hold Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) status or [Voluntary Protection Program](#) (VPP) status, as well as companies working to achieve SHARP or VPP certification.

But you don't have to be involved in either of those Oregon OSHA programs to participate in alliance activities and to benefit from the knowledge and training the group offers.

The nonprofit's services are open to any person, employer, or government looking for best practices to improve on-the-job safety and health for workers.

What's more, the alliance, which is organized into eight regions across Oregon, is branching out by intensifying its training efforts in the Portland area, adding videos to its website, and cultivating connections through social media.

Meanwhile, the alliance will tackle an emerging topic in workplace safety and health during its next general meeting: "Medical and Recreational Marijuana and Changes to the Rules." The meeting is from 9 a.m. to noon on Thursday, Sept. 14, at the Chemeketa Brooks Regional Training Center, 4910 Brooklake Road NE in Brooks.

The meeting, open to alliance members and nonmembers alike, is free. Just RSVP by Thursday, Sept. 7, to Eileen Tanner, 503-393-0890, ext. 254, or etanner@covanta.com.

The meeting in September is just one example of the alliance's work to meet its goals. Those include:

- Promote the achievement of SHARP and VPP recognition
- Help Oregon companies who are in the process of becoming SHARP or VPP
- Assist all companies in Oregon with safety and health management
- Make recommendations to Oregon OSHA on activities, rules, best practices, and strategic planning
- Serve as a resource to all Oregon workplaces



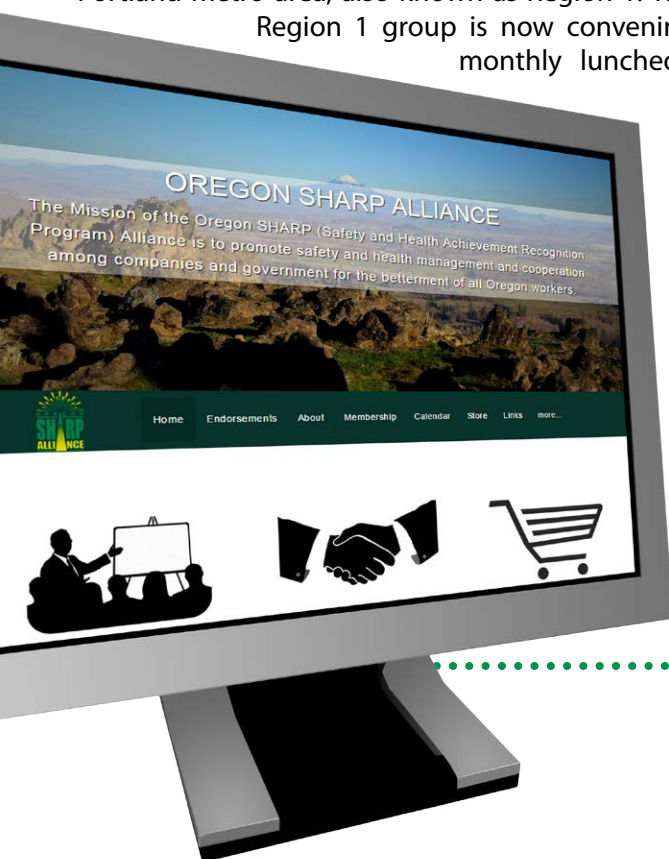
Promoting Safety & Health

The group convenes quarterly three-hour training sessions at various locations across the state on the second Thursday of March, September, and December. The June quarterly meeting is held the day before the Blue Mountain Conference in Pendleton each year.

A closer look at the alliance's calendar is [available online](#).

These days, the alliance is particularly focused on finding ways to expand training and networking opportunities.

Take, for instance, its growing presence in the Portland metro area, also known as Region 1. The Region 1 group is now convening monthly luncheon



meetings on the second Tuesday in February, March, May, June, August, September, November, and December. The Region 1 group also is convening quarterly training sessions on the second Tuesday in January, April, July, and October.

Topics covered during the Portland group's recent quarterly trainings include "SHARP Alliance Programs, Resources, and Opportunities," and "SHARP/VPP Quality Industrial Hygiene Program." On Oct. 10, the Region 1 group will take up another topic: "Maintaining Momentum."

Moreover, the Region 1 group has established a LinkedIn Group, dubbed The Oregon SHARP Alliance – Region One. It serves as an open forum for LinkedIn members to share ideas, successes, and best practices.

Cliff Butler, the environmental, health, and safety manager for Sherwin-Williams, Purdy in Portland, volunteers as an alliance delegate who manages Region 1. He encourages those who are interested in joining the LinkedIn Group to contact him at cliff.l.butler@sherwin.com.

Butler said the alliance's goals and work are all about moving "further down the road of protection for workers." He added, "Worker safety isn't just good business, it's the right thing to do."

As the alliance expands in-person training opportunities and takes a page from social media, it's also making online training videos available to anyone.

"The intent and hope is to have a video library," Hurliman said. Up and running on the group's website is "[Safety Leadership at All Levels](#)," a video that delves into the issue of what makes a leader effective at influencing safety.

Jennifer Olson-Morzenti, the alliance's board chairwoman who directs product stewardship at Thermo Fisher Scientific, said the group strives to stay on top of emerging workplace safety and health topics.

A big part of how it does that, she said, is promoting better connections and communications through a variety of online and in-person training and networking opportunities.

And as the alliance adapts to changing times and needs, it stays focused on its core mission. "The alliance will continue to focus on best practices for workplace safety," Olson-Morzenti said. ●

