

# Hybrid for HazCom

OSHA requires HazCom training for all employees who have the potential to be exposed to or work with hazardous materials. Comprehensive training is an effective tool for developing a knowledgeable, motivated and safety-conscious workforce. But delivering effective HazCom training-within budget and without unacceptable conflict with production priorities-is a challenge.

In the past, the main tool a manager has had in the HazCom training toolbox was traditional stand-and-deliver training--effective, yet often inconvenient and expensive. With the invention of interactive CD-ROMs and the Internet explosion, self-paced "e-learning" was added to the toolbox, bringing the potential for great cost savings, but often handicapped by low employee motivation. Current trends in the training industry include a hybrid approach to training. This approach combines web-based training and live training into a single training tool. This "hybrid training" or "blended learning" offers the effectiveness of an on-site instructor while providing the flexibility and cost savings provided by web-based learning.

This concept can also be applied to training topics that require "hands-on" training to be effective. HazCom training is an excellent candidate for blended learning because the key components of the training program can be delivered effectively through self-paced, web-based training. These include the knowledge delivery portion of the training, such as understanding the HazCom standard, state-specific regulations and the employer's written HazCom program. The instructor-led portion can then focus on motivating and cultivating employee enthusiasm for safety. You can easily start moving toward a hybrid training program by taking several steps:

- 1) Start integrating one or two web-based training topics into your program.
- 2) Increase the percentage of web-based to instructor-led training sessions to 25% and 75%, respectively.
- 3) Move to a 50/50 split between the two methods as your employees gain confidence in using web-based training.
- 4) Graduate to a 75% web-based, 25% instructor-led balance (or a similar split that is suitable to your organization).

Focus on knowledge or information delivery through the web and live interaction being delivered by a qualified instructor.

Hybrid training may well be the way to reach more employees, improve information retention and maintain a cost-effective program. Any training program must meet your organizational objectives, whether they are improved safety, enhanced efficiency and production, controlled risk management or myriad others. Blended learning should be considered an additional tool to meet those objectives. **PS**

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