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OSHA Issues Industry Specific Guidance Designed to Keep Workers Safe

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (“OSHA”) has begun issuing industry-specific alerts designed to keep workers safe. The guidance provides employers with a roadmap of compliance guidelines in an effort to assist employers in meeting their obligations and to help reduce workers’ risk of exposure to the coronavirus.

May 5, 2020

Since March 2020, OSHA has issued a number of alerts for both general employee safety and also industry-specific guidance.

OSHA recently issued translations of its general poster “Ten Steps All Workplaces Can Take to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Coronavirus” in eleven additional languages besides English and Spanish. Those languages include: Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese Simplified, Chinese Traditional, French Creole, Hmong, Korean, Polish, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The ten steps include:

- Encourage workers to stay home if sick
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes
- Provide a place to wash hands or alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol
- Limit worksite access to only essential workers, if possible
- Establish flexible worksites and flexible worksites, if feasible
- Discourage workers from using other workers’ phones, desks, or other work tools and equipment
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, equipment and other elements of the work environment
- Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved cleaning chemicals with label claims against the coronavirus

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfection products
- Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns

In addition, to date, industry-specific guidance has been issued in English and Spanish for the following industries:

- Retail Workers
- Package Delivery Workforce
- Manufacturing Industry Workforce
- Construction Workforce
- Restaurants & Beverage Vendors Offering Takeout or Curbside Pickup

Each of the industry-specific guidelines reiterate some of the steps applicable to all industries and then include more specific guidance.

For example, the Restaurant & Beverage Vendor guidance directs employers to:

- Avoid direct hand-off, when possible
- Display a door or sidewalk sign with the services available (e.g., take-out, curbside), instructions for pick-up and hours of operation
- Reserve parking spaces near the front door for curbside pickup only
- Train workers in proper hygiene practices and the use of workplace controls

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- Allow workers to wear mask over their nose and mouth (note: some states, like New York are requiring this)
- Practice sensible social distancing by maintaining six feet between co—workers and customers.
 - Mark six-foot distances with floor tape in pickup lines
 - Encourage customers to pay ahead of time by phone or online
 - Temporarily move workstations to create more distance
 - Install plexiglass partitions, if feasible.
- Practice social distancing (e.g., demarcating six-foot distances with floor tape, temporarily moving workstations, installing plexiglass)
- Minimizing employee and customer interaction
- Promoting personal hygiene where workers do not have access to soap and water for hygiene
- Discourage workers' from using other workers tools and equipment or, where tools or equipment must be shared, provide and instruct workers to use alcohol-based wipes to clean tools before and after use.

Employers should periodically review the websites for both OSHA and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as new guidance is frequently being issued.

The other industry-specific guidance similarly encourages using innovative approaches to:

For more information or if you have any questions about how this new development may affect your business, please contact a member of our Employment Group.



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