

OSHA Issues New Guidance on Preventing Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

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On January 29, 2021 OSHA issued 12 pages of detailed Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace. https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework

The key takaways from the Guidance are that Employers should do the following:

1. Conduct a hazard assessment.
2. Identify control measures to limit the spread of the virus.
3. Adopt policies for employee absences that don't punish workers as a way to encourage potentially infected workers to remain home.
4. Ensure that coronavirus policies and procedures are communicated to both English and non-English speaking workers.
5. Implement protections from retaliation for workers who raise coronavirus-related concerns.
6. Make a COVID-19 vaccine or vaccination series available at no cost to all eligible employees and provide information and training on the benefit and safety of vaccinations.
7. Do not distinguish between vaccinated workers and those who are not vaccinated for purposes of protective measures.

This guidance does not amount to a standard or regulation but provides detailed information about the steps you can take to prevent the spread of COVID in your workplace. We urge our clients and friends to review this new guidance and seek legal advice if you have questions about it or other COVID matters. We are also prepared to assist you in developing policies regarding COVID vaccinations and educating your employees regarding the benefits and safety of COVID vaccines and answering your questions about whether such vaccinations should be voluntary or mandatory.

This article is general in nature and does not constitute legal advice. Please note that new guidance is being provided by authorities on a daily basis so please monitor new developments and guidance, including but not limited to our firm's COVID-19 Resource Center. Readers with legal questions should consult the authors, John Vering (jvering@sb-kc.com), Mark Opara (mopara@sb-kc.com), or other shareholders in Seigfreid Bingham's Employment Law Group, including: Shannon Johnson, John Neyens, Brenda Hamilton, Julie Parisi, or Christopher Tillery or your regular contact at Seigfreid Bingham at 816-421-4460.