



# COVID-19 and OSHA Standards



Although there is no specific Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standard covering workplace exposure to COVID-19 **OSHA expects employers to take measures to protect workers from workplace exposure to COVID-19.** The two most relevant standards that may apply are the General Duty Clause, and the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standard.



As a reminder, the **General Duty Clause** (Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970, 29 USC 654(a)(1)) requires employers to furnish to each worker "a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."



The **PPE standard** (29 CFR 1910 Subpart I) requires employers to provide gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection appropriate to protect workers from occupational hazards.



OSHA may issue citations to employers that fail to take appropriate actions to protect their workers from infectious disease hazards including COVID-19. ADP can help employers protect their employees from COVID-19 hazards and help comply with OSHA.

For the latest information on the symptoms, prevention, and treatment of coronavirus, visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention coronavirus webpage](#).

For detailed OSHA guidance, please review [OSHA Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#).



ADP can help you to understand how these requirements may apply to your company and provide guidance on ways to comply with OSHA. Contact your Risk & Safety Consultant to start the conversation.

ADP can help you with employee training on COVID-19 and other safety-related topics. Contact your Risk & Safety Consultant to learn more.

## What can employers do to protect workers from COVID-19?

Employers need to consider how best to reduce the exposure and spread of COVID-19 and reduce the impact in the workplace. OSHA has made recommendations for all employers including, but not limited to:

- **Develop or update an infectious disease prevention and response plan and stay well-informed of guidance from public health authorities**
  - The infectious disease prevention and response plan should define worker exposure classifications and controls specific to your workplace based on OSHA's guidance
- **Implement basic infection prevention measures**
  - Use social distancing, staggered work shifts, downsizing operations, delivering services remotely, drive-thru options, and other measures such as telecommuting and technology to reduce employee exposures
  - Support respiratory (cough and sneeze) etiquette and hand hygiene (frequent and thorough hand washing)
  - Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and equipment in the work environment
  - Educate workers on how they can reduce the spread of COVID-19
- **Develop policies and procedures to promptly identify and separate sick employees**
  - Inform and encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
  - Inform employees to report when they are sick or experiencing signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- **Implement workplace flexibilities and protections**
  - Cross-train workers to continue operations in the event of employee absences and preparing for supply-chain interruptions
  - Review and implement flexible sick leave and supportive policies and practices
  - Consider how to maintain critical business operations and identify alternate supply chain for critical goods and services

## What is required of employers when providing PPE to workers to protect against COVID-19?

**Employers need to:**

- Assess the hazards to which workers may be exposed
- Evaluate the risk of exposure
- Select, implement, and ensure workers use controls in addition to PPE to prevent exposure, including physical barriers to control the spread of the virus; social distancing; and personal hygiene practices
- When respirators are required, employers must also implement a comprehensive respiratory protection program in accordance with the Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134)



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