

Occupational Safety and Health Administration
4th Annual Alliance Program Forum (APF)
September 23, 2021

Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

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August 2021 Revised Protecting Workers Guidance

Much of the Protecting Workers Guidance Remains the Same:

- OSHA **continues to** work with the CDC and federal partners to monitor the need for additional guidance.
- For employers and workers not covered by the OSHA's COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS), **focuses on** COVID-19 exposure risks to workers who are unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk, helping them take appropriate steps.
- The **recommendations are advisory in nature and informational in content**, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace.
- Continues to emphasize vaccination as optimal step to protect workers.
- Provides recommendations for **higher-risk workplaces** (Appendix)

August 2021 Revised Protecting Workers Guidance

Multi-layered controls to protect workers:

- Providing workers time off to get vaccinated
- Isolating sick workers and instructing them to stay home
- Implementing physical distancing for unvaccinated/at-risk workers in common areas
- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., teleworking) and flexible work hours
- Providing face coverings to workers
- Maintaining and improving ventilation systems.

August 2021 Revised Protecting Workers Guidance Reflects CDC July 27, 2021, Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People



- Wearing a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial or high transmission.
- Choosing to wear a mask regardless of level of transmission, particularly if individuals are at risk or have someone in their household who is at increased risk.
- Getting tested 3-5 days following a known exposure and wearing a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result.

August 2021 Revised Protecting Workers Guidance: Expansion on Higher Risk Workers and Workplaces



NEW

- **Otherwise At-Risk Workers:** Some conditions, such as a prior transplant, as well as prolonged use of corticosteroids or other immune-weakening medications, may affect workers' ability to have a full immune response to vaccination.
- **Expanded** recommendations for workers in high-risk workplaces that create greater risks for unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk workers – because they involve close contact for extended periods of time, or frequent contact with unvaccinated people or people whose vaccination status is not known.
- **Higher-risk workplaces include manufacturing; meat, seafood, and poultry processing; high volume retail and grocery; and agricultural processing.**

Appendix Expanded: Measures Appropriate for Higher-Risk Workplaces with Mixed-Vaccination Status Workers



NEW

- **Heightened risk** due to the following types of environmental factors:
 - Close contact, Duration of contact, Type of contact, Closed spaces
 - Other distinctive factors including **areas of substantial or high community transmission**
- All higher-risk workplaces where there are unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk workers
 - Stagger break times
 - Stagger workers' arrival and departure times
 - Provide visual cues
 - **Require masks be worn whenever possible by unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk workers, and also by fully vaccinated workers in areas of substantial or high community transmission**
 - Implement strategies (tailored to your workplace) to improve ventilation

Guidance for All Industries

- **Best Practices regardless of vaccination status:**
 - Conducting a workplace risk assessment
 - Preparing a response plan with multi-layered controls
 - Taking steps to improve ventilation
- **Multi-layered controls tailored to your workplace are especially important for those workers who are unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk.**
- **Multiple layers of protection are also especially important in high-risk mixed-vaccination settings.**

OSHA COVID-19 Resources

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



OSHA Requirements

Regulations

NEW Emergency Temporary Standard for Healthcare

NEW National Emphasis Program

NEW Enforcement

Recording and Reporting

- Non-ETS Reporting and Recording FAQ

Workers' Rights

Guidance

For Everyone

- **UPDATED 8/13** Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace

- Summary

- Hazard Recognition

- Control and Prevention

By Industry

By Topic

Non-ETS COVID-19 FAQ

Highlights and Tools

[Vaccines.gov](#)

[CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Page](#)

[CDC Workplaces and Businesses Page](#)

[Job Accommodation Network \(COVID-19\)](#)

[OSHA Newsroom](#)

[Archived OSHA Resources](#)

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OSHA.gov/coronavirus includes latest information and resources on protecting workers from exposure to COVID-19.





www.osha.gov

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