

# COVID-19 and the Construction Industry

#KeepWorkersSafe



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**US DOL OSHA**



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# OSHA's Mission?

**Prevent work-related injuries, illnesses, and deaths.**

# OSHA's Comprehensive Approach



Enforcement

Cooperative and  
State Programs



Standards and  
Guidance

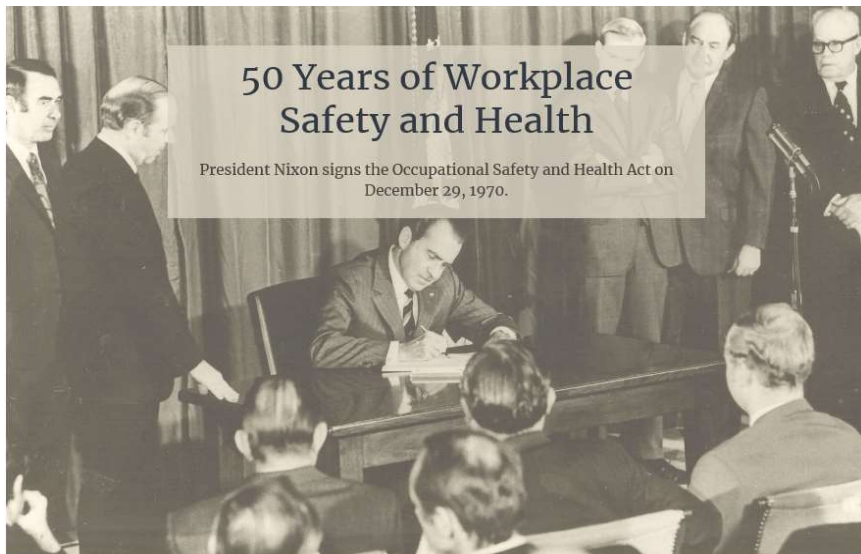


# How many people work for OSHA?

2,173

People to make a positive impact on the lives and Safety and Health of our nation's working men and women

# OSHA at 50



- **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OSH ACT**
- **Landmark legislation:** establishing OSHA and providing federal workplace safety and health protections.

# OSHA at 50

- Occupational fatalities in 1970 were about 14,000 workers
- We have same hazards as 1970
  - Struck by, caught in, electrical and falls
- The “goal”
  - Everyone goes home safe at night – **and return healthy for the next shift**

# Today's workplace?

Occupational fatalities in 2018 were about 5,250 workers

- Slip, trip and fall / 791
- Struck by object / 786
- Electrical contact / 174
- Transportation accidents / 2,080
- Death by Suicide / 304
- Unintentional Overdoses / 305

<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm>



# OSHA's Outreach Network



## On-site Consultation



# What is novel coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause illness in people. Coronaviruses circulate among animals, including camels, cattle, and cats.
- **SARS-CoV-2**, the seventh known human coronavirus and the virus that causes **COVID-19**, is thought to have jumped species from animals to begin infecting humans.

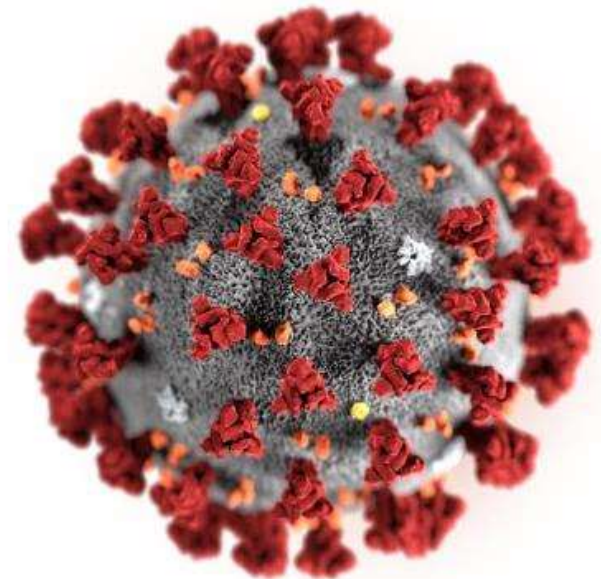


Illustration: CDC / Alissa Eckert & Dan Higgins

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

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Safety and Health  
Administration

# Current pandemic

- **More than 8 million** cases worldwide.
- Different parts of the U.S. are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity.
- CDC reports 2,248,029 cases across 50 states, DC, PR, USVI, Guam and

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

Latest situation summary:  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)

The screenshot shows the CDC website for Coronavirus (COVID-19). The header includes the CDC logo and the text "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention" and "CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People™". There is a search bar and a language dropdown menu set to "Coronavirus". The main heading is "Coronavirus (COVID-19)". Below this are two main navigation buttons: "How to protect yourself" and "What to do if you are sick". A progress bar is visible below the navigation buttons. Under the "SYMPTOMS" section, it says "Watch for fever, coughing and shortness of breath" and "Learn more". To the right, there are three links: "Slow the spread", "Cloth face covers NEW", and "COVIDView Weekly Surveillance NEW".

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# Current pandemic

- **U.S. COVID-19 cases include:**
  - Imported cases in travelers.
  - Cases among close contacts of a known case.
  - Community-acquired cases where the source of the infection is unknown.
- Most U.S. states are reporting community spread of COVID-19.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

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# Signs and symptoms of infection

- COVID-19 typically causes mild respiratory illness, but can cause severe disease, including pneumonia-like illness (novel coronavirus-infected pneumonia or NCIP).
  - Symptoms include: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
- Symptoms begin 2-14 days after exposure.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

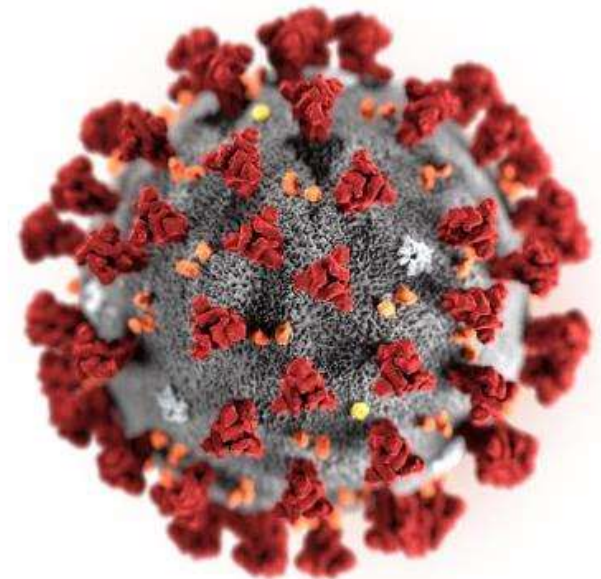


Illustration: CDC / Alissa Eckert & Dan Higgins

# How COVID-19 is spread

- **Person-to-person spread.**
  - COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from someone who is infected. People who are infected often—but not always—have symptoms of illness. People without symptoms are able to spread virus.
- **Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.**

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

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# If you have been exposed/infected

- **Prior to seeking treatment, alert your healthcare provider or occupational health clinic if you think you may have COVID-19.**
- **Tell your healthcare provider if you have been exposed to someone with the virus and have signs/symptoms of infection, as well as about any recent travel to areas where COVID-19 is spreading.**



Photo: CDC / Scott Housley

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Diagnosis and treatment

- **Your healthcare provider can determine if you should be tested for COVID-19.**
- **There is no vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19.**
- **Some patients, especially those who become very ill, may require supportive care in a hospital.**



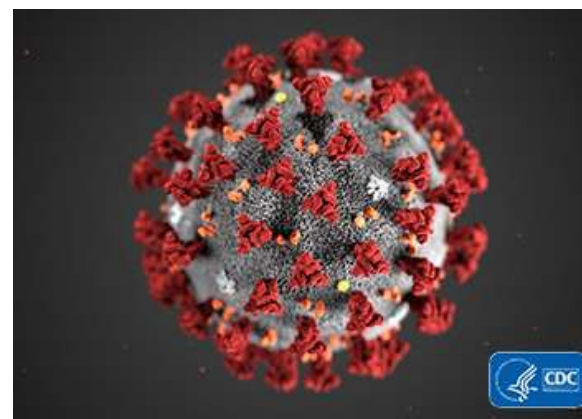
Photo: CDC / Scott Housley

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)



# Protecting workers from risk of exposure to COVID-19

- OSHA is coordinating closely with CDC, including NIOSH, and other federal agencies to monitor the ongoing pandemic.
- OSHA's message is clear:
  - Employers should have a plan for protecting workers and preventing further spread of disease, as well as maintaining the employer's day-to-day functions.



[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Occupational exposure risks

- OSHA is closely coordinating with CDC, including NIOSH, and other agencies to monitor the ongoing pandemic.
- The risk of exposure in many workplaces likely reflects the risk to the general public in the community where the workplace is located.
- Risk increases when workers have frequent, close contact with the general public or other coworkers.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)



Photo: Turner Construction Company

# Occupational exposure risks

- **Workers in some sectors may have increased risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, including in:**
  - Healthcare and Laboratories
  - Emergency response
  - Mortuary services and other deathcare
  - Airline operations
  - Border protection and passenger screening
  - Critical retail operations (e.g., grocery stores, pharmacies)



Photo: U.S. Customs and Border Protection / James Tourtellotte

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Occupational exposure risks

- **Workers in other sectors, including some in critical infrastructure, may be at risk because of frequent or long-duration contact with coworkers:**
  - Food processing (including meatpacking)
  - Manufacturing
  - Construction
  - Oil and gas
  - Other sectors where workers would typically be within 6 feet of one another



[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# OSHA guidance: Worker Exposure Risk

- **Four exposure risk levels:**
  - Lower (or caution)
  - Medium
  - High
  - Very high
- **Most are likely in lower or medium exposure risk level**
- **Employers should carefully examine the specific risks in their workplaces and plan accordingly**
- **Workers' risks in many industries may reflect the risk to the rest of the public in a particular community**

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)


## Worker Exposure Risk to COVID-19

**Classifying Worker Exposure to SARS-CoV-2**

Worker risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, during an outbreak may depend in part on the industry type and need for contact within 6 feet of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19.

OSHA has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels, as shown below. Most American workers will likely fall in the lower exposure risk (caution) or medium exposure risk levels.

**Occupational Risk Pyramid for COVID-19**



**VERY HIGH EXPOSURE RISK**  
Jobs with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical, postmortem, or laboratory procedures. Workers include:

- Healthcare and morgue workers performing aerosol-generating procedures on or collecting/handling specimens from potentially infectious patients or bodies of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of death.

**HIGH EXPOSURE RISK**  
Jobs with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19. Workers in this category include:

- Healthcare delivery, healthcare support, medical transport, and mortuary workers exposed to known or suspected COVID-19 patients or bodies of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of death.

**MEDIUM EXPOSURE RISK**  
Jobs that require frequent/close contact with people who may be infected, but who are not known or suspected patients. Workers in this category include:

- Those who may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, high-population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings), including individuals returning from locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission.

**LOWER EXPOSURE RISK (CAUTION)**  
Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected.

- Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

For more information, see the *Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19*.

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# Construction Work Tasks and Associated Risk

Lower (caution)	Medium	High	Very High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Tasks that allow employees to remain at least 6 feet apart and involve little contact with the public, visitors, or customers.</li></ul> <p>Note: For activities in the lower (caution) risk category, OSHA's <a href="#"><u>Interim Guidance for Workers and Employers of Workers at Lower Risk of Exposure</u></a> may be most appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Tasks that require workers to be within 6 feet of one another.</li><li>•Tasks that require workers to be in close contact (within 6 feet) with customers, visitors, or members of the public.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Entering an indoor work site occupied by people such as other workers, customers, or residents suspected of having or known to have COVID-19, including when an occupant of the site reports signs and symptoms consistent with COVID-19.</li></ul> <p>Note: Employers may consider delaying this work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Category not applicable for most anticipated work tasks.</li></ul> <p>Note: Most construction work tasks are associated with no more than high exposure risk; see the work tasks associated with lower, medium, or high risk on this chart.</p>

# Safe Work Practices

- Adopt staggered work schedules, e.g., provide alternating workdays or extra shifts, to reduce the total number of employees on a job site at any given time and to ensure physical distancing.
- Identify choke points where workers are forced to stand together, such as hallways, hoists and elevators, ingress and egress points, break areas, and buses, and implement policies to maintain social distancing.
- In elevators and personnel hoists, ensure 6 feet distance between passengers in all directions and equip operators with appropriate respiratory protection and other necessary PPE.

# Safe Work Practices

- Coordinate site deliveries in line with the employer's minimal contact and cleaning protocols. Delivery personnel should remain in their vehicles if at all possible.
- Institute a rigorous housekeeping program to reduce dust levels on the job site.

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/construction.html>



# Safe Work Practices

- Keep in-person meetings (including toolbox talks and safety meetings) as short as possible, limit the number of workers in attendance, and use social distancing practices.
- Ensure clean toilet and handwashing facilities. Clean and disinfect portable job site toilets regularly. Fill hand sanitizer dispensers regularly. Disinfect frequently touched items (i.e., door pulls and toilet seats) regularly.

# Cloth Face Coverings

- CDC [recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings as a protective measure in addition to social distancing (i.e., staying at least 6 feet away from others). Cloth face coverings may be especially important when social distancing is not possible or feasible based on working conditions.
- Cloth face coverings are intended to protect other people—not the wearer.



[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Training topics

- Train all workers about their risk of occupational exposure to COVID-19 as well as on what to do if they have traveled to high-risk areas or been exposed to possible cases.
- Particular risk of occupational exposure to COVID-19
- Sources of exposure to the virus and hazards associated with that exposure.
- Appropriate ways to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure, including use of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Training topics

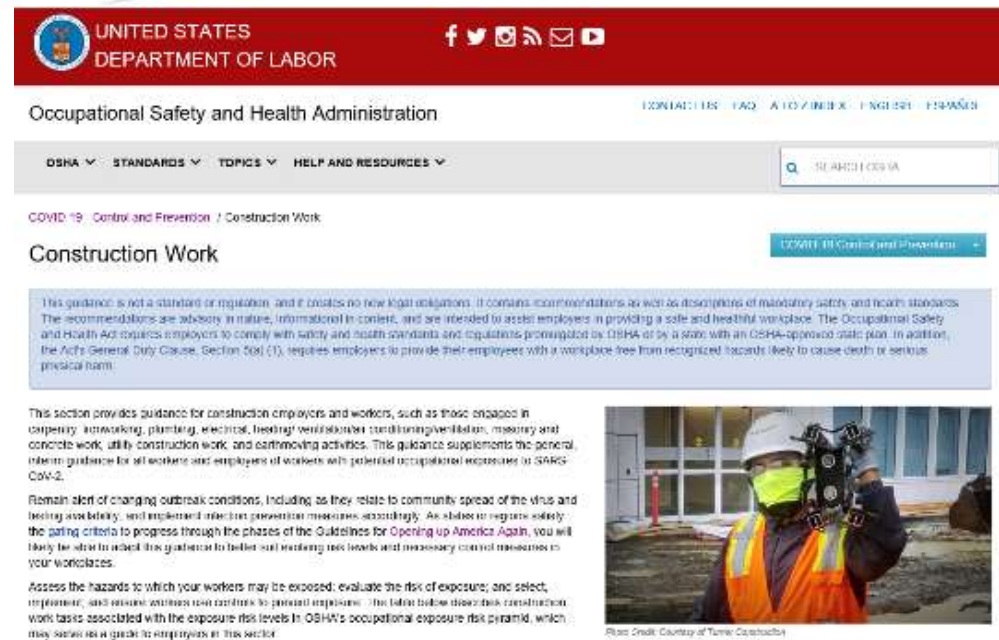
- Appropriate ways to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure, including use of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and PPE.
- Some OSHA standards (e.g., BBP, PPE) require worker training.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# OSHA guidance

- OSHA has developed a variety of guidance materials for workers and employers on how to stay healthy during the pandemic.
- [OSHA.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus) includes information on implementing the hierarchy of controls when workers have specific exposure risks.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)



The screenshot shows the OSHA website header with the United States Department of Labor logo and social media icons. The main navigation bar includes 'Occupational Safety and Health Administration' and a search bar. The page content is titled 'Construction Work' under the 'COVID-19 Control and Prevention' section. A disclaimer states that the guidance is advisory and informational. The text describes the scope of the guidance for construction workers and employers, and provides instructions on how to assess hazards and implement controls. A photo of a construction worker in safety gear is also visible.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

OSHA STANDARDS TOPICS HELP AND RESOURCES

SEARCH OSHA

COVID-19 Control and Prevention / Construction Work

Construction Work

This guidance is not a standard or regulation, and it creates no new legal obligations. It contains recommendations as well as descriptions of mandatory safety and health standards. The recommendations are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with safety and health standards and regulations promulgated by OSHA or by a state with an OSHA-approved state plan. In addition, the Act's General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), requires employers to provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm.

This section provides guidance for construction employers and workers, such as those engaged in carpentry, ironworking, plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, masonry and concrete work, utility construction work, and earthmoving activities. This guidance supplements the general intent guidance for all workers and employers of workers with potential occupational exposures to SARS-CoV-2.

Remain alert of changing outbreak conditions, including as they relate to community spread of the virus and testing availability, and implement infection prevention measures accordingly. As states re-evaluate safety the gating criteria to progress through the phases of the Guidelines for Opening up America Again, you will likely be able to select the guidance to better suit existing risk levels and necessary control measures in your workplaces.

Assess the hazards to which your workers may be exposed; evaluate the risk of exposure; and select, implement, and reassess control measures to prevent exposures. The table below describes construction work tasks associated with the exposure risk levels in OSHA's occupational exposure risk pyramid, which may serve as a guide to employers in this sector.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Turner Construction

# OSHA guidance

## OSHA Alerts

- **COVID-19 Guidance for the Construction Workforce**
- **COVID-19 Guidance for the Manufacturing Industry Workforce**
- **COVID-19 Guidance for the Package Delivery Workforce**
- **COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Workers**
- **Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)



**OSHA ALERT**

### Prevent Worker Exposure to Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The novel coronavirus (officially called COVID-19) is believed to spread from person-to-person, primarily through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus is also believed to spread by people touching a surface or object and then touching one's mouth, nose, or possibly the eyes.

Employers and workers should follow these general practices to help prevent exposure to coronavirus:

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and running water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Employers of workers with potential occupational exposures to coronavirus should follow these practices:

- Assess the hazards to which workers may be exposed.
- Evaluate the risk of exposure.
- Select, implement, and ensure workers use controls to prevent exposure, including physical barriers to control the spread of the virus; social distancing; and appropriate personal protective equipment, hygiene, and cleaning supplies.

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

For interim guidance and other resources on protecting workers from coronavirus, visit OSHA's COVID-19 webpage.

OSHA issues alerts to draw attention to worker safety and health issues and solutions.

OSHA Occupational Safety and Health Administration • [osha.gov/covid-19](http://osha.gov/covid-19) • 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • @OSHA\_DOL



# CDC/OSHA guidance

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks:

- Practice good and frequent hand hygiene.
- Follow good cough/sneeze etiquette.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Photo: U.S. Department of Defense

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# OSHA enforcement

- Typically responds to emergencies, including disease outbreaks, in a technical assistance posture.
- Provides compliance assistance to employers to help ensure workers are protected.
- Provides technical assistance and support to other federal agencies, as well as state/local partners.
- Implemented interim enforcement plan for investigating COVID complaints, while ensuring the safety of workers, employers, and inspectors.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)





# Existing OSHA standards protect workers from exposure

- Follow existing OSHA standards to help protect workers from exposure to SARS-CoV-2 and infection with COVID-19.
- Employers should also remember that OSHA can use the General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to ensure that workers are protected from recognized safety and health hazards that may cause serious harm.

## Relevant OSHA requirements

- Personal Protective Equipment (29 CFR 1926 and 1910 including:
  - Criteria for PPE (1926.95)
  - Safety Glasses (1926.102)
  - Respiratory Protection (1910.134/1926.103)
- Bloodborne Pathogens (29 CFR 1910.1030)
- Hazard Communication (29 CFR 1910.1200)
- Recordkeeping (29 CFR part 1904)

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Enforcement memos

- All of the enforcement memos are listed below:
  - [Updated Interim Enforcement Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). (May 19, 2020).
  - [Revised Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). (May 19, 2020).
  - [Enforcement Guidance on Decontamination of Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#). (April 24, 2020).

# Enforcement memos

- All of the enforcement memos are listed below:
  - [Expanded Temporary Enforcement Guidance on Respiratory Protection Fit-Testing for N95 Filtering Facepieces in All Industries During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic.](#) (April 8, 2020).
  - [Enforcement Guidance for Use of Respiratory Protection Equipment Certified under Standards of Other Countries During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic.](#) (April 3, 2020).
  - [Discretion in Enforcement when Considering an Employer's Good Faith Efforts During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic.](#) (April 16, 2020).

# OSHA guidance – recordkeeping exposures to COVID-19

- COVID-19 can be a recordable illness if a worker is infected as a result of performing their work-related duties. However, employers are only responsible for recording cases of COVID-19 if all of the following are met:
  - The case is a confirmed case of COVID-19 (see CDC information on persons under investigation and presumptive positive and laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19);
  - The case is work-related, as defined by 29 CFR 1904.5; and
  - The case involves one or more of the general recording criteria set forth in 29 CFR 1904.7 (e.g., medical treatment beyond first-aid, days away from work).

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# OSHA guidance – recordkeeping exposures to COVID-19

- OSHA is providing enforcement discretion around recordkeeping for most sectors.
- Visit OSHA's Injury and Illness Recordkeeping and Reporting Requirements page for more information.

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)

# Worker Rights

- All workers have the right to:
  - Raise a safety or health concern with their employer or OSHA, request personal protective equipment, or report a work-related injury or illness, including COVID-19.
  - Receive information and training on job hazards in their workplace.

# Whistleblower Protections under the OSH Act

- Employers cannot retaliate (fire, lay off, demote, etc.) against employees for engaging in activity protected under the OSH Act.
- Protected activity includes:
  - Requesting personal protective equipment
  - Wearing personal protective equipment
  - Reporting a work-related injury or illness, including COVID-19, to an employer or OSHA
  - Reporting an unsafe condition to an employer or OSHA
  - Requesting guidance on workplace safety from an employer, OSHA, or other government entity

# Safe + Sound Campaign

- Every workplace should have a safety and health program that includes key elements to protect workers.
- Good for workers and businesses' bottom line
- Targets small and medium-sized businesses



[www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek](http://www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek)





# For continual updates

- **Visit OSHA's website to sign up to receive OSHA information:**
  - QuickTakes biweekly newsletter (**287,000+ subscribers**)
  - Tip of the Day (**33,700+ subscribers**)
  - [www.osha.gov/contactus](http://www.osha.gov/contactus)
- **Follow OSHA on social media**
  - Twitter: [@OSHA\\_DOL](https://twitter.com/OSHA_DOL) (**21,500+ followers**)
  - Facebook: Follow the Department of Labor page

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)



# Questions?

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- **OSHA Directorate of Technical  
Support and Emergency  
Management**

Phone: 202-693-2300

[www.osha.gov/coronavirus](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus)





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