OSHA requirements apply to preventing occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Among the most relevant are:

- OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards (in general industry, 29 CFR 1910 Subpart I), which require using gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection when job hazards warrant it.
  - When respirators are necessary to protect workers, employers must implement a comprehensive respiratory protection program in accordance with the Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134).
- The General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970, 29 USC 654(a)(1), which requires employers to furnish to each worker "employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."

OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens standard (29 CFR 1910.1030) applies to occupational exposure to human blood and other potentially infectious materials that typically do not include respiratory secretions that may contain SARS-CoV-2 (unless visible blood is present). However, the provisions of the standard offer a framework that may help control some sources of the virus, including exposures to body fluids (e.g., respiratory secretions) not covered by the standard.

State Standards

There are twenty-eight OSHA-approved State Plans, operating state-wide occupational safety and health programs. State Plans are required to have standards and enforcement programs that are at least as effective as OSHA's and may have different or more stringent requirements.

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) Aerosol Transmissible Diseases (ATD) standard is aimed at preventing worker illness from infectious diseases that can be transmitted by inhaling air that contains viruses (including SARS-CoV-2), bacteria or other disease-causing organisms. While the Cal/OSHA ATD standard is only mandatory for certain healthcare employers in California, it may provide useful guidance for protecting other workers exposed to SARS-CoV-2.

Employers must also protect their workers from exposure to hazardous chemicals used for cleaning and disinfection. Employers should be aware that common sanitizers and sterilizers could contain hazardous chemicals. Where workers are exposed to hazardous chemicals, employers must comply with OSHA's Hazard Communication standard (in general industry, 29 CFR 1910.1200), Personal Protective Equipment standards (in general industry, 29 CFR 1910.138).
CFR 1910 Subpart I) and other applicable OSHA chemical standards. OSHA provides information about hazardous chemicals used in hospitals in the Housekeeping section of its Hospital eTool.

**Other relevant OSHA standards**

Depending on the specific work task, setting, and exposure to other biological or chemical agents, additional OSHA requirements that may apply include:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Recordkeeping and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illness (29 CFR 1904)</th>
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<tr>
<th>General Industry (29 CFR 1910)</th>
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• Letters of interpretation |
| 1910.1030, Bloodborne pathogens | • Topic Page  
• Directives  
• Federal Register notices  
• Letters of interpretation |
Enforcement Memoranda

**Interim Enforcement Response Plan**

OSHA's Interim Enforcement Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) provides instructions and guidance to Area Offices and compliance safety and health officers (CSHOs) for handling COVID-19-related complaints.

**Enforcement Discretion**

OSHA recognizes that employers in many sectors may experience challenges in complying with certain provisions of the agency’s standards as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including where those standards require the use of certain types of PPE (e.g., respirators) or provision of medical surveillance and training to workers. Accordingly, OSHA is providing enforcement flexibilities for specific provisions of certain standards and requirements to address these challenges and help ensure the continued protection of worker safety and health.


In light of the Presidential Memorandum on making general use respirators available for healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, OSHA has issued temporary enforcement guidance for:

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Enforcement Guidance for Respiratory Protection and the N95 Shortage Due to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic</td>
<td>Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134), Selection of respirators (paragraph (d)); and/or the equivalent respiratory protection provisions of other health standards</td>
<td>April 3, 2020</td>
<td>Remains in effect</td>
<td>- Release of Stockpiled N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators Beyond the Manufacturer-Designated Shelf Life: Considerations for the COVID-19 Response - Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement Guidance for Use of Respiratory Protection Equipment Certified Under Standards of Other Countries or Jurisdictions During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic</td>
<td>Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134), Selection of respirators (paragraph (d)); and/or the equivalent respiratory protection provisions of other health standards</td>
<td>April 3, 2020</td>
<td>Remains in effect</td>
<td>- Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanded Temporary Enforcement Guidance on Respiratory Protection Fit-Testing for N95 Filtering Facepieces in All Industries During the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Pandemic</td>
<td>Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134), Required annual fit-testing (paragraph (f)(2))</td>
<td>April 8, 2020</td>
<td>Remains in effect</td>
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**Enforcement Discretion for Other OSHA Standards and Requirements**

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Memorandum

Discretion in Enforcement when Considering an Employer’s Good Faith Efforts During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Applies to
Various standards that require annual or recurring audits, reviews, training, or assessments; see memorandum for details.

Effective Date
April 16, 2020

Status
Remains in effect

Related Information

Additional Directives

Note: The “Directives” bullets above link to directives related to each OSHA standard. The directives in this list provide additional information that is not necessarily connected to a specific OSHA standard highlighted on this Safety and Health Topics page.

- Rules of agency practice and procedure concerning OSHA access to employee medical records. CPL 02-02-072, (August 22, 2007). Provides guidance to OSHA personnel concerning rule application and agency practice and procedure set forth at 29 CFR 1913.10 when accessing personally identifiable worker medical records. The guidance also covers authorization by the Assistant Secretary to conduct a limited worker medical information review when: 1) OSHA standards require such information, and 2) there is a need to gain access to determine compliance.

Workers’ Rights and Employers’ Responsibilities

Section 11(c) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, 29 USC 660(c), prohibits employers from retaliating against workers for raising concerns about safety and health conditions. Additionally, OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Program enforces the provisions of more than 20 industry-specific federal laws protecting employees from retaliation for raising or reporting concerns about hazards or violations of various airline, commercial motor carrier, consumer product, environmental, financial reform, food safety, health insurance reform, motor vehicle safety, nuclear, pipeline, public transportation agency, railroad, maritime, securities, and tax laws. OSHA encourages workers who suffer such retaliation to submit a complaint to OSHA as soon as possible in order to file their complaint within the legal time limits, some of which may be as short as 30 days from the date they learned of or experienced retaliation. An employee can file a complaint with OSHA by visiting or calling his or her local OSHA office; sending a written complaint via fax, mail, or email to the closest OSHA office; or filing a complaint online. No particular form is required and complaints may be submitted in any language.

OSHA provides recommendations intended to assist employers in creating workplaces that are free of retaliation and guidance to employers on how to properly respond to workers who may complain about workplace hazards or potential violations of federal laws. OSHA urges employers to review its publication: Recommended Practices for Anti-Retaliation Programs (OSHA 3905 - 01/2017).