

Risk Control

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S EXECUTIVE ORDER DEALING WITH COVID-19 SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

President Biden signed an executive order on January 21 directing OSHA to revise its current COVID-19 safety recommendations. It also addressed whether or not there is a need for OSHA to issue an emergency temporary standard.

OSHA published [Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#) on January 29, 2021. It is designed for most places of work outside of healthcare; OSAH has published separate guidelines for healthcare. The recommendations are advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace. The guidance document covers several different topics:

What Workers Need to Know About COVID-19 Protections in the Workplace	A list of protective measures to stop the spread of COVID-19.
The Roles of Employers and Workers in Responding to COVID-19	Elements of an employer-enacted COVID-19 prevention program. For example, assigning a workplace coordinator, measures to limit spread, including measures for employers at a higher risk for severe illness, education and training, instructions for employees who are infected or potentially infected, performing enhanced cleaning, guidelines on screening and testing, making a COVID-19 vaccine available and establishing an anonymous process for workers to voice concerns about COVID-19 related hazards.
Additional Details on Key Measures for Limiting the Spread	Information on quarantining and isolation.
Implement Physical Distancing in All Communal Work Areas	Limiting the number of workers at the worksite.
Installing Barriers Where Physical Distancing Cannot Be Maintained	Using transparent shields where 6 feet of distance between workers is not possible.

Suppressing the Spread of the Hazard Using Face Coverings	Providing workers with face covering.
Improving Ventilation	How to decrease the spread of COVID-19 by improving ventilation systems, filters, using fans, and letting in outdoor airflow.
Use Personal Protective Equipment When Necessary	Using PPE as a supplemental control when the measures stated above do not fully protect workers.
Provide the supplies necessary for good hygiene practices	Providing ample supplies so that workers, customers and visitors can clean their hands and cover coughs and sneezes.
Perform routine cleaning and disinfection	Following the CDC recommendations to clean and disinfect workplaces.

Many of these guidelines have already been incorporated in state reopening guidelines. The CDC has published a list of [state reopening plans](#) which has up-to-date information.

Each industry segment – and each company – will have to adapt the guidelines to fit their own circumstances. The guidelines apply differently at the office than in the field, and, from worksite-to-worksite. Reopening New York published [guidelines for construction business](#) that tailors the recommendations for the construction trade.