

OSHA CORNERSTONES

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OSHA's Latest Guidance on Creating COVID-19 Prevention Programs

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently issued new guidance on mitigating and preventing the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. This guidance—which pertains to organizations outside of the health care sector—is intended to inform both employees and employers of the risks of occupational COVID-19 exposure, as well as outline top COVID-19 control measures for the workplace.

Specifically, this guidance suggests that employers implement COVID-19 prevention programs. According to OSHA, the most effective programs engage workers and their union or representatives in the program's development. These programs should include the following key elements:

- A designated coordinator who is in charge of handling workplace COVID-19 concerns
- A hazard assessment that identifies how and where employees might be exposed to COVID-19 at work

- Various measures aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace (e.g., requiring face coverings, improving ventilation, enforcing physical distancing and performing routine cleanings)
- Additional protections for employees with a higher risk of severe illness (e.g., older staff or workers with underlying medical conditions)
- Education and training for staff on policies and procedures related to COVID-19 prevention
- A process for employees to anonymously report issues regarding occupational COVID-19 hazards
- Isolation and quarantine protocols for potentially exposed employees
- COVID-19 testing and screening arrangements
- Recording and reporting requirements for workplace COVID-19 cases and deaths
- A workplace COVID-19 vaccination plan

[Click here](#) to review OSHA's latest guidance.

National Safety Stand-down Scheduled for 2021

This year's [National Safety Stand-down](#) to prevent falls in the construction industry is May 3-7. This event encourages employers to talk to their staff about workplace fall hazards and the importance of utilizing fall protection. After all, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, falls from elevation consistently reign as the leading cause of death within the construction sector.

Nevertheless, many fall-related incidents can be prevented with adequate safety precautions in place. Employers can play their part in protecting staff from falls at the construction site by planning ahead to get the job done safely, providing the necessary equipment and adequately training employees on the proper use of this equipment.

For more fall prevention resources, contact us today.

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2021 OSHA Penalty Amounts

OSHA must adjust its civil penalty amounts for inflation each year. As such, the Department of Labor recently [released](#) its 2021 inflation-adjusted civil monetary penalties that may be assessed on employers for violations of a wide range of federal laws, including the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

The increased penalty amounts are as follows:

Violation Type	2020	2021
Posting requirement	Up to \$13,494 for each violation	Up to \$13,653 for each violation
Other-than-serious violation	Up to \$13,494 for each violation	Up to \$13,653 for each violation
Serious violation	Up to \$13,494 for each violation	Up to \$13,653 for each violation
Willful violation	Between \$9,639 and \$134,937 per violation	Between \$9,753 and \$136,532 per violation
Uncorrected violation	Up to \$13,494 per day until the violation is corrected	Up to \$13,563 per day until the violation is corrected

With these changes in mind, employers should become familiar with the new penalty amounts and review their workplace safety protocols to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

For additional OSHA updates and compliance guidance, contact us today.

OSHA's increased amounts apply to any civil monetary penalties that are assessed after Jan. 15, 2021.