



OSHA launches program to protect high-risk workers from coronavirus

In response to President Biden's executive order on protecting worker health and safety, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has launched a National Emphasis Program (NEP) focusing enforcement efforts on companies that put the largest numbers of employees at serious risk of contracting the coronavirus. The program also prioritizes employers that retaliate against workers for complaints about unsafe or unhealthy conditions, or for exercising other rights protected by federal law.

NEP inspections will enhance the agency's previous coronavirus enforcement efforts, and will include some follow-up inspections of worksites inspected in 2020. The program's focused strategy ensures abatement and includes monitoring the effectiveness of OSHA's enforcement and guidance efforts. The program will remain in effect for up to one year from its issuance date, though OSHA has the flexibility to amend or cancel the program as the pandemic subsides.

For programmed inspections, the NEP will target high risk industries for COVID-19. The primary targets for COVID-19 inspections remain in the healthcare and personal care industries, including physicians' and dental offices, home healthcare, ambulance services, hospitals, including psychiatric and substance abuse hospitals, nursing care facilities, residential intellectual and developmental disability facilities, and retirement and assisted living communities.

For un-programmed inspections, which include inspections initiated based on complaints, referrals from media reports, reports from other agencies like local health departments or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and severe incident reports such as in-patient hospitalizations and fatalities, OSHA will be prioritizing these cases for on-site inspections, especially allegations of potential worker exposures to COVID-19. This is in stark contrast to how OSHA handled the thousands of complaints received in the last year, most of which it treated through an informal process of allowing employers to self-investigate allegations related to COVID-19 and report back to OSHA their findings and detail the measures they had in place to protect employees. Most inquiries of this nature resulted in closure of the cases without a formal inspection from OSHA. Fatalities cases also will be prioritized.

New to OSHA's target list for this NEP are certain non-healthcare industries such as meat processing, poultry processing, supermarkets and other grocery stores, discount department stores, general warehousing and storage, temporary agencies, restaurants, and prisons and correctional facilities. OSHA also has identified a secondary list of non-healthcare essential critical infrastructure industries such as

food and agriculture and manufacturing of food, beverage, wood, paper products, chemicals, energy sector manufacturing, plastic and rubber, mineral products, and metal manufacturing.

For questions or additional information, please contact Sedgwick's Jim Wirth at 614.546.7331 or jim.wirth@sedgwick.com

Premium installment & true-up reporting for private employers

Employers must pay premiums timely to the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) to receive and maintain workers' compensation coverage.

Through the year, employers have been making premium installment payments based on estimated payroll. As we near the conclusion of the 2020 policy year (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021), BWC will be requiring all employers to reconcile ("true-up") the payroll that was used to estimate their premium with their actual payroll for the policy year. BWC will also be sending information regarding premium installments for the upcoming 2021 policy year (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022).

Important reminders

BWC mailed 2021 estimated annual premium notices along with your installment schedule around May 1, 2021.

- If you expect your payroll to change during the 2021 rating year from the estimate provided, you can call BWC at 800-644-6292 and request a change to your payroll and installment schedule.
- Failure to make installment payments based on the installment schedule can result in lapses in coverage, therefore make sure installment payments are paid by the due dates as noted on the installment schedule. The first installment payment will be due by mid/late June 2021.
- If you pay your full 2021 premium by the June installment due date, you can earn a 2% Early Payment Discount. There is no need to switch to an annual installment, but the premium must be paid in full by the due date. BWC will issue the 2% refund the following month.

BWC will mail notices regarding the July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 true-up around July 1, 2021. True-up reporting and payment is due by August 15, 2021.

- Failure to true-up and pay any additional premium will result in your policy being removed from all discount and rebate programs and it will remain ineligible for discounts and rebate in future years.

Employers can receive a rebate for paying premiums and completing true-up online with BWC's Go-green Rebate Program.

If you have any questions regarding premium installments or the true-up process, contact our Sedgwick program manager, Bob Nicoll, at 330.418.1824.

Distance Learning in June 2021

BWC provides at least two webinars on different safety and health topics each month. Subject matter experts share their knowledge and provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions. These lessons engage students with a variety of interactive methodologies, including whiteboard activities, polling, and chat discussions. To obtain BWC program credit, participants must complete a short

knowledge assessment within the BWC Learning Management System after the webinar and earn a passing score. If the webinar provides credits the host will provide further details regarding requirements for those seeking BWC program credit or CEUs during each webinar.

[Click here for more Information](#)

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