



OSHA's Planning Guidance to Employers About Hardening Workplaces Against Coronavirus

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As the federal agency charged with the responsibility for assuring safe and healthful conditions for American workers, it's no surprise that OSHA has added its voice to the clamor over Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). OSHA – in conjunction with the CDC – has posted guidance to employers about facing the COVID-19 threat [here](#).

The guidance explains what COVID-19 is, how it's transmitted, and how its spread could affect workplaces. The guidance then urges employers to act by reducing the risk of worker exposure through traditional practices: Engineering, administrative and work practice controls (in that hierarchy), supplemented by personal protective equipment. Of course, OSHA recommends that employers adopt a formal plan of action.

The guidance recognizes that employer action should be commensurate with actual occupational risk of exposure. Healthcare workers, for example, are at very high risk, while home-based workers with little physical contact with clients or teammates fall into the lower band of the risk spectrum. OSHA provides general best practices for every workplace and then offers specific guidance for each level of exposure risk, including team members working abroad.

Finally, OSHA acknowledges what it doesn't know about COVID-19. The guidance is intentionally flexible to account for the learning curve associated with the disease. OSHA has devoted an entire page of its website to posting the latest resources about COVID-19 [here](#). Additional guidance on preparing for COVID-19 is also available [here](#).

The prudent employer should consider OSHA's guidance and periodically check the resources available (with no fear of exposure to COVID-19). Of course, the guidance does not address every potential occupational safety-related issue presented by the outbreak. Employers are encouraged to review all policies and personnel decisions related to COVID-19 for compliance with applicable occupational safety requirements.

Please note: This alert contains general, condensed summaries of actual legal matters, statutes and opinions for information purposes. It is not meant to be and should not be construed as legal advice. Readers with particular needs on specific issues should retain the services of competent counsel.

[Please click here for additional legal updates from Williams Mullen regarding COVID-19.](#)

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