



OSHA Trade Release

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Occupational Safety and Health Administration
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US Department of Labor announces enforcement, effort for focused inspections in hospitals, nursing care facilities treating COVID-19 patients

WASHINGTON – For two years, millions of the nation’s healthcare workers have been battling the coronavirus. Many have endangered themselves as they care for those who contract COVID-19 while working in high-risk settings that expose themselves and their families.

As the nation moves to the next phase of the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Labor recognizes the need to prepare for any new variants that may emerge and provide healthcare workers the protections they deserve.

The Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration today announced an enforcement memorandum for a short-term increase in highly focused inspections directed at hospitals and skilled nursing care facilities that treat or handle COVID-19 patients.

OSHA’s goal is to expand its presence to ensure continued mitigation to control the spread of COVID-19 and future variants of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and protect the health and safety of healthcare workers at heightened risk for contracting the virus.

“We are using available tools while we finalize a healthcare standard,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker. “We want to be ahead of any future events in healthcare.”

The agency will be initiating focused inspections to emphasize monitoring for current and future readiness to protect workers from COVID-19. Follow-up inspections will be conducted at sites that were previously issued citations, as well as where complaints were received but the agency did not conduct in-person inspections.

OSHA intends to expand its presence in targeted high-hazard healthcare facilities during a three-month period from March 9, 2022 to June 9, 2022. Through this focused enforcement initiative, the agency will verify and assess hospital and skilled nursing care employers’ compliance actions taken, including their readiness to address any ongoing or future COVID-19 surges.

This initiative supplements OSHA’s targeted enforcement under the Revised COVID-19 National Emphasis Program [DIR 2021-03 (CPL 03)] by conducting focused follow-up and monitoring inspections of previously inspected or investigated hospitals and skilled nursing care facilities within four North American Industry Classification System codes listed in the memorandum where COVID-19 citations or Hazard Alert Letters were issued, including remote-only inspections where COVID-19-related citations were issued.

This initiative and the revised COVID-19 National Emphasis Program would comprise 15 percent of OSHA’s enforcement activity.

On Dec. 27, 2021, OSHA announced its decision to withdraw the non-recordkeeping portions of the Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard. The agency will accept continued compliance with the Healthcare ETS as satisfying employers’ related obligations under the General Duty Clause, Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protection standards.

OSHA has continually conducted outreach at the national, regional, and area office levels throughout the duration of the pandemic outbreak. Visit the agency’s Coronavirus Disease webpage for more information and resources on keeping workers safe from COVID-19.

Healthcare facilities across the country have been applying key components of the Healthcare Emergency Temporary Standard successfully to protect the health and safety of their employees. OSHA would like to learn more about these successful programs. If you would like to share your success stories, please send an email to Healthcaresafety@dol.gov.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

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