



Health and Safety Obligations during Covid-19

In response to several measures undertaken as a response to the Covid-19 outbreak, there is major restructuring of business processes while companies incorporate remote work initiatives; temporary furloughs; ramped production schedules; reduced onsite staff; etc. Essentially leading to a myriad of new responsibilities and stressors.

With regulatory agencies, both Federal and State, adjusting themselves to the changes in work environment, there have been many questions regarding the ability and need to complete all compliance activities such as trainings, inspections, and overall safety of their employees during this time. There is a copious amount of information online, some true, the majority is hearsay and guessing at best.

Are regulatory activities still in effect?

Yes. There has been consistent communication that all deadlines and requirements remain the same throughout this period for both essential and non-essential businesses. The means you should have posted your OSHA Log back on February 1 and submitted your injury reporting on the OSHA website by March 2, 2020. OSHA has also published guidelines on preparing workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Is enforcement in full effect?

OSHA has not announced an agency-wide shut down; this means OSHA is open for business. OSHA inspections can still take place in all job sectors. OSHA will primarily focus on fatalities, imminent danger situations, and complaints. Programmed inspections may be impacted by the current shelter in place guidance but this has not been made official by OSHA.

How should operations proceed?

Maintain all compliance obligations as normal. Continue to be vigilant of the risks involved in performing regular work activities as well as those recently introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic. OSHA's guidance is to implement an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response plan, focusing on identifying risk factors for exposure, implementing control measures to minimize the risk of infection and responding accordingly when someone tests positive in the workforce.