



NEWS RELEASE

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Standards Board Unanimously Adopts Emergency Temporary Standards to Protect Workers from COVID-19

The new Cal/OSHA standards are expected to go into effect by the end of the month

Sacramento — The Department of Industrial Relations' (DIR) Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board unanimously adopted emergency temporary standards to protect workers from hazards related to COVID-19. The emergency standards will be in effect immediately if approved by the Office of Administrative Law in the next 10 calendar days.

The [temporary standards](#) apply to most workers in California not covered by Cal/OSHA's Aerosol Transmissible Diseases [standard](#). Under the new regulations, employers must have a written COVID-19 Prevention Plan that addresses the following:

- System for communicating information to employees about COVID-19 prevention procedures, testing, symptoms and illnesses, including a system for employees to report exposures without fear of retaliation.
- Identification and evaluation of hazards – screening employees for symptoms, identifying workplace conditions and practices that could result in potential exposure.
- Investigating and responding to cases in the workplace – responding immediately to potential exposures by following steps to determine who may have been exposed, providing notice within one business day about potential exposures, and offering testing to workers who may have been exposed.
- Correcting COVID-19 hazards – including correcting unsafe conditions and work practices as well as providing effective training and instruction.
- Physical distancing – implementing procedures to ensure workers stay at least six feet apart from other people if possible.
- Face coverings – providing face coverings and ensuring they are worn.
- Adopting site-specific strategies such as changes to the workplace and work schedules and providing personal protective equipment to reduce exposure to the virus.

- Positive COVID-19 case and illness recording requirements and making the COVID-19 Prevention Plan accessible to employees and employee representatives.
- Removal of COVID-19 exposed workers and COVID-19 positive workers from the workplace with measures to protect pay and benefits.
- Criteria for employees to return to work after recovering from COVID-19.
- Requirements for testing and notifying public health departments of workplace outbreaks (three or more cases in a workplace in a 14-day period) and major outbreaks (20 or more cases within a 30-day period).
- Specific requirements for infection prevention in employer-provided housing and transportation to and from work.

The Standards Board will file the rulemaking package today with the Office of Administrative Law, which has 10 calendar days to review and approve the temporary workplace safety standards enforced by Cal/OSHA. Once approved and published, the full text of the adopted emergency standards will appear in the new Title 8 sections 3205 (COVID-19 Prevention), 3205.1 (Multiple COVID-19 Infections and COVID-19 Outbreaks), 3205.2 (Major COVID-19 Outbreaks) 3205.3 (COVID-19 Prevention in Employer-Provided Housing) and 3205.4 (COVID-19 Prevention in Employer-Provided Transportation to and from Work) of the [California Code of Regulations](#). Pursuant to the state's [emergency rulemaking process](#), after an initial effective period the board will have two opportunities to readopt the temporary standards.

Cal/OSHA will expeditiously convene a stakeholder meeting that will include industry and labor representatives to review the requirements of the emergency regulation and solicit feedback and recommend updates.

The [Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board](#), a seven-member body appointed by the Governor, is the standards-setting agency within the Cal/OSHA program. The Standards Board's objective is to adopt reasonable and enforceable standards at least as effective as federal standards. The Standards Board also has the responsibility to grant or deny applications for variances from adopted standards and respond to petitions for new or revised standards.

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. Employers and workers who have questions or need assistance with workplace health and safety programs can call [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) at 800-963-9424.

Complaints about workplace safety and health hazards can be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#). Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734).

Members of the press may contact Peter Melton or Frank Polizzi at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.