

OSHA Publishes Resource on Coronavirus Outbreak

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Practices

Employment & Labor Law

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has published a new webpage that links to resources on the agency's site about workplace safety and health issues raised by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus outbreak. OSHA's webpage also links to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations on travel to China.

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For example, the page connects users to specific recommendations about how to prevent exposure to healthcare, clinical laboratory, airline, waste management and other workers.

It also links to several agency standards and directives that may apply in the outbreak, including the "general duty clause" of the Occupational Safety and Health Act; OSHA's personal protective equipment (PPE) standard; and OSHA's recordkeeping and reporting requirements:

- The "general duty clause" requires employers to provide a workplace that is "free from recognized hazards...likely to cause death or serious harm to employees."
- The PPE standard requires that protective equipment, clothing and barriers be provided whenever necessary to prevent employees from being exposed to environmental hazards.
- The recordkeeping and reporting requirements mandate that certain employers keep a record of work-related illnesses and injuries. According to OSHA, while recordkeeping regulations exempt recording of the common cold and flu, the 2019 Novel Coronavirus "is

a recordable illness when a worker is infected on the job.” In addition, reporting requirements may apply.

OSHA's webpage also links to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations on travel to China. In making decisions about international business travel, employers should keep the “general duty clause” in mind.

Be sure to check the OSHA and CDC websites for the most up-to-date information about the coronavirus and workplace safety and health.

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