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OSHA DIRECTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

DIRECTIVE NUMBER: DIR 2021-01 (CPL-03)

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 12, 2021

SUBJECT: National Emphasis Program – Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

ABSTRACT

Purpose:

This Direction describes policies and procedures for implementing a National Emphasis Program (NEP) to ensure that employees in high-hazard industries or work tasks are protected from the hazard of contracting SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2), the cause of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The NEP augments OSHA’s efforts addressing unprogrammed COVID-19-related activities, *e.g.*, complaints, referrals, and severe incident reports, by adding a component to target specific high-hazard industries or activities where this hazard is prevalent. The NEP targets establishments that have workers with increased potential exposure to this hazard, and that puts the largest number of workers at serious risk. In addition, this NEP includes an added focus to ensure that workers are protected from retaliation, and are accomplishing this by preventing retaliation where possible, distributing anti-retaliation information during inspections, and outreach opportunities, as well as promptly referring allegations of retaliation to the Whistleblower Protection Program.

Scope:

This Direction applies OSHA-wide.

References:

[Presidential Executive Order on Protecting Worker Health and Safety](#), January 21, 2021.

Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act), [29 U.S.C. § 654](#).

OSHA Instruction, [CPL 02-00-164](#), *Field Operations Manual (FOM)*, April 14, 2020.

OSHA Instruction, [CPL 02-03-007](#), *Whistleblower Investigations Manual*, January 28, 2016.

OSHA Guidance, [Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#), January 29, 2021.

(See [Section III](#) for additional references.)

Cancellations:

None.

