Engage PEO Client Alert:

OSHA Updates COVID-19 Guidance

On August 13, 2021, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released revised guidance on masking to align with the CDC changes issued in late July for fully vaccinated individuals. This is due in part to the rising case numbers and increased transmission rate of the Delta variant.

The revised OSHA guidance:

- Recommends that fully vaccinated workers in areas of substantial or high community transmission wear masks to protect unvaccinated workers
- Recommends that fully vaccinated workers who have close contacts with people with COVID-19 wear masks for up to 14 days unless they have a negative coronavirus test at least 3-5 days after such contact
- Clarifies recommendations to protect unvaccinated workers and other at-risk workers in manufacturing, meat and poultry processing, seafood processing, and agricultural processing
- Links to the latest guidance on K-12 schools and CDC statements on public transit

OSHA continues to emphasize that **vaccination is the optimal step to protect workers and encourages employers to engage with workers and their representatives to implement multi-layered approaches to protect unvaccinated or otherwise at-risk workers from COVID-19.** OSHA suggests that "employers consider adopting policies that require workers to get vaccinated or to undergo regular COVID-19 testing—in addition to mask wearing and physical distancing—if they remain unvaccinated".

Clients should also note that several states, including California, New York, Oregon, and Virginia, require COVID-19 safety plans. Additionally, New York's HERO Act also requires a written airborne infectious disease plan.

For more information regarding the updated OSHA mask guidance, please reference the following OSHA website page: Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace.

If you have any questions, please contact the Engage Risk Management team.