

Blog Post

Be Prepared For Increase in COVID-19 Inspections Under OSHA's New National Emphasis Program

March 23, 2021

On March 12, 2021, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced a new National Emphasis Program (NEP) designed to significantly reduce worker exposure to COVID-19 by targeting industries and worksites where employees may have a high frequency of close-contact exposures. The new NEP on COVID-19 has two main components:

1. It increases OSHA inspections of high-hazard industries where COVID-19 exposure is expected to be prevalent. The employers will be chosen from the primary and secondary target lists as seen below:

a. Primary target list ([Appendix A](#)):

- i. Healthcare industry (*i.e.*, dentist, home health care, ambulance services, general medical and surgical hospitals, nursing care, retirement communities, assisted living facilities, *etc.*)
- ii. Non-healthcare industries (*i.e.*, meat processing plant, poultry processing, supermarkets, general warehouse and storage, full-service restaurants, and correctional institutions, *etc.*)

b. Secondary target list ([Appendix B](#)):

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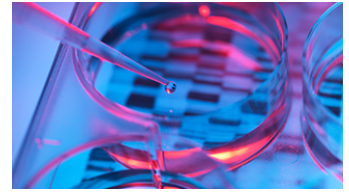
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i. Industries with non-healthcare essential workers who are likely to have the highest frequency of close-contact exposure to the public or to coworkers resulting from their on-site work-related duties.

ii. Food manufacturing, other miscellaneous manufacturing, food and beverage stores, component manufacturing, agriculture, *etc.*

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2. It increases focus on preventing retaliation against workers who raise concerns by distribution anti-retaliation materials during inspections and increasing outreach programs.

Accordingly, effective March 12, 2021, each regional office will conduct targeted COVID-19 inspections from a randomized list created from the target lists, and the number of inspections are to account for at least 5 percent of the region's total assigned inspection goal (1,600 inspections OSHA-wide).

This NEP is effective for 12 months from the effective date (*i.e.*, through March 12, 2022), unless canceled or extended by a superseding directive.

Please contact your Akerman lawyer for assistance and more information on how to be prepared for increase in COVID-19 related inspections under the new NEP.

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