

## Eli's Hospice Insider

### Hospice News: Get Up To Speed On OSHA's Newest COVID Guidelines

New advisory guidance from OSHA may give you a peek at mandatory requirements coming soon.

On Jan. 29, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration issued a new guidance document, "Protecting Workers: Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace." The guidance aims to "inform employers and workers in most workplace settings outside of healthcare to help them identify risks of being exposed to and/ or contracting COVID-19 at work and to help them determine appropriate control measures to implement," OSHA says on its website.

OSHA issued the guidance in response to the "Executive Order on Protecting Worker Health and Safety" signed by President **Biden** on Jan. 21, the day after his inauguration.

While providers may be careful to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance in patient care, they may not be quite as stringent in their back offices and other non-patient-care areas.



OSHA notes that its recommendations in the guidance are "advisory." However, don't be surprised to see them turn mandatory soon. The executive order requires OSHA to "consider whether any emergency temporary standards on COVID-19, including with respect to masks in the workplace, are necessary, and if such standards are determined to be necessary, issue them by March 15, 2021."

"If OSHA moves forward with issuing an emergency temporary standard (ETS), we expect that many of the recommendations in this guidance will become part of the ETS," say attorneys **Mark Duvall, Jayni Lanham,** and **Deepti Gage** with law firm Beveridge & Diamond in online analysis.

The guidance includes an explicit reference to face coverings as protective, among other new features.

The guidance is at [www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework](http://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework).