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Employee Takeaways for President Biden's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

Many health experts and business leaders agree that vaccination is likely the most effective way to limit the spread of COVID-19 and maintain uninterrupted operations. While more than 175 million Americans are fully vaccinated, nearly 80 million eligible people have yet to get their first shot.

To further encourage vaccination, President Joe Biden's administration has announced plans requiring large employers (those with 100 or more employees) to mandate COVID-19 vaccines or require weekly testing for unvaccinated employees. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is expected to issue an Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) in the coming weeks, though the exact timeline is unclear.

For now, employees can familiarize themselves with the federal government's plans and what these requirements could mean for their workplace. This article highlights what employees should know about the imminent COVID-19 vaccine and testing mandate.

Mandate Overview

The Biden administration's plans require employers with 100 or more employees to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for on-site employees or ensure all unvaccinated employees are tested for COVID-19 once a week. In addition, employers must provide paid time off for employees to get vaccinated and recover from side effects, if necessary.

While OSHA's ETS will answer many outstanding questions, the White House has already provided some

clarifying details regarding to whom the mandate applies:

- **Company qualification**—The 100-employee threshold will be counted on a company-wide basis.
- **Remote staff**—Remote employees who don't work in contact with others would not be covered by the ETS, as long as they aren't in the physical workplace.

OSHA's ETS can remain in place for six months. After that time, it must be replaced by a permanent OSHA standard. It's also important to remember the implementation of this mandate will vary by workplace.

Employee Takeaways

Legal battles over the ETS are expected. However, regardless of courtroom challenges, applicable employers will still be preparing to comply with the ETS. After all, it's possible that employers could be penalized for noncompliance while lawsuits work their way through the courts.

Therefore, if the ETS applies to your organization, expect to see some changes to workplace policies and procedures. Once the ETS is released, your employer should discuss exactly how it will impact your workplace. In the meantime, talk to your HR representative about any concerns or questions you may have at this moment.

For More Information

Visit the White House's [website](#) to learn more about its COVID-19 action plan.

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