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HR BRIEF

Provided by **Evolution of Benefits**

OSHA Clarifies COVID-19 Reporting Requirements

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has published two additional answers to its list of COVID-19 frequently asked questions (FAQs). The new answers clarify when employers must report COVID-19 in-patient hospitalizations and fatalities.

Reporting Hospitalizations

OSHA requires employers to report in-patient hospitalizations only if the hospitalization occurs within 24 hours of an exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace. As a result, employers must report COVID-19 hospitalizations only if the hospitalizations are:

- For in-patient treatment; and
- The result of a work-related case of COVID-19.

The report must be submitted **within 24 hours** of the time the employer determines there was an in-patient hospitalization caused by a COVID-19 case.

Hospitalization for diagnostic testing or observation only is not "in-patient" hospitalization.

Reporting Fatalities

OSHA requires employers to report fatalities that occur within 30 days of an exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace.

Employers must submit fatality reports **within eight hours** of learning that the fatality took place and that it was due to a work-related exposure.

Recording Requirements

These FAQs address only reporting requirements for COVID-19. Employers can review their COVID-19 recording requirements on OSHA's website.

Preventing Workplace Gossip During a Crisis

Gossip is a reality in many workplaces and, when not adequately addressed, can impact company culture and employee morale. During a crisis, such as the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, leaders are challenged with maintaining positive employee morale while addressing current realities.

Employees know that a crisis can cause disruption, and they want to be aware of both the current and future impact of a crisis. These impacts can include:

- What changes will take place at their workplace
- The potential for layoffs or furloughs, if any
- If and how long work-from-home measures will be in place
- Any potential impact on total rewards

Should leaders fail to address their concerns, gossip can begin to serve as a source for employees seeking up-to-date information.

Employer Takeaway

Effective communication can help address employee concerns, reducing the risk of employees spreading or listening to rumors and gossip. To mitigate gossip, tips for employers include:

- Address employee concerns transparently.
- Use communication channels that reach all employees.
- Equip managers with the knowledge to effectively discuss employee concerns.
- Set expectations for employees.
- Consider why gossip is occurring.

Every workplace is different, and employers should consider how communication initiatives will resonate with their employees. For more employee relations resources, contact Evolution of Benefits today.

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