

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Updates its Guidance for Protecting Workers in Inpatient Health Care Settings from Ebola

Oakland—Although widespread outbreak of Ebola in the United States is still unlikely and no cases of Ebola have presented in California, Cal/OSHA, in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), today posted [updated Ebola guidance](#) for inpatient hospital settings. The updated guidance builds on Cal/OSHA's Interim Guidance for Ebola released on October 15, and provides additional direction to ensure hospitals and health care workers take the proper steps to safely provide care for suspected or confirmed Ebola patients in California.

"Ensuring worker safety and protection is our top priority," said Juliann Sum, Acting Chief of Cal/OSHA. "We have focused these guidelines to provide additional direction for inpatient settings, where infectious disease transmission risk is highest. These updated guidelines clarify the requirements hospitals must meet to maintain workplace safety and to prevent exposure to Ebola."

The guidelines require workers at risk of exposure to the Ebola virus be provided personal protective equipment (PPE) that covers all parts of the body and protects against the passage of fluids. Each piece of the PPE must be compatible with the rest of the PPE ensemble during use, removal and decontamination.

Cal/OSHA's standards regarding respiratory protection go beyond the current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations, with the requirement of battery-powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) during any aerosol-generating procedure. PAPRs must include full cowls or hoods to protect all areas of the face, head, neck and upper torso. Employees must also be trained and given the opportunity to practice donning and doffing the specific PPE ensemble used in their hospital.

The updated guidelines further require that:

- Hospitals update their exposure control plans to address Ebola procedures. The plans must include active employee involvement and must describe procedures to protect employees in all other potentially affected areas of the hospital, such as emergency departments.
- Workers covered by these requirements are provided medical services, which may include monitoring, testing, and temporary removal from work in the event of an exposure incident.

The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) and Cal/OSHA continue to work with the CDPH to provide workplace safety guidelines for Ebola response in clinical settings beyond inpatient care.

Several occupational safety and health standards address worker protections when exposure to infectious diseases including Ebola may occur in a health care setting. They include Cal/OSHA's [Bloodborne Pathogens](#) standard adopted in 1992 and the [Aerosol Transmissible Diseases](#) standard adopted in 2009. The standards apply to hospital workers and emergency medical services, as well as workers in biological laboratories, decontamination workers or public safety employees who may be exposed to infectious disease hazards.

Cal/OSHA reminds all employers and workers that any suspected cases of Ebola must be promptly reported to the local public health department.

The [CDPH](#) has a variety of updated information on Ebola and reporting requirements. The CDC has also posted specific [information for health care workers and settings](#).

For media inquiries contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.



The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). Non-media inquiries can contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.