

OSHA - CHANGING GUIDELINES IN DENTAL PRACTICES



Mary Govoni is an internationally recognized speaker, author and consultant on clinical efficiency, ergonomics, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance, infection control and team communication. Mary is a past president and a life member of the American Dental Assistants Association, a member of the American Dental Hygienists Association, a consultant to the American Dental Association Council on Dental Practice, a member of the Organization for Safety Asepsis and Prevention, the National Speakers Association, and the Academy of Dental Management Consultants and the Speaking and Consulting Network.



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OSHA released new rules for all healthcare settings, including dental practices. Below is the summary of those changes. Mary Govoni, MBA, CDA, RDA*, has reviewed OSHA's new requirements and gives guidance for preparation for an OSHA inspection in a webinar by Viva Learning. The webinar helps you to understand OSHA requirements for infection control, prepare for their inspections and ways to provide a safe work environment. This CE webinar includes checklists of OSHA requirements for training, documentation, hazard assessments, and more, to keep you prepared for OSHA inspections under the new regulations and health standards post COVID-19.

OSHA Changes of Regulations Post COVID-19

In 2018, OSHA updated the standards for personal protection equipment (PPE) usage and hazard assessments for handling and disposal in healthcare settings that used respirators during patient procedures. These changes are now specifically mandated in dental due to COVID-19 and includes the usage of N-95 along with other PPE, as well as stronger infection control and prevention guidelines.

OSHA is now requiring practices to conduct the following:

- Hazard assessment, preparedness and response plan to handle COVID-19 concerns at the workplace
- Review control measures to avoid exposure and spread of COVID-19
- Ensure policies and procedures are communicated and understood by all team members
- Delegate a COVID-19 coordinator to handle COVID-19 related reports and regulatory advisement



What Can Lead to an OSHA Inspection?

Post-pandemic, OSHA added specific COVID-19 rules for all healthcare settings. Employees and employers must abide by these regulations and are subject to inspection of their practice. Typically, OSHA inspections are followed by an initial complaint against poor office safety practice that may include improper PPE usage, inadequate biohazard disposal and management, or a COVID-19 related report against social distancing, respirator usage, or general outbreak management.



What Happens During an OSHA Inspection?

The inspector may ask for: training records, safety plans, posters, receipts for purchase of PPE, social distancing guidelines, among others, depending on the complaint. The OSHA inspector may question the employees on how to properly use PPE, review product safety data sheets, or general office safety protocol. After inspection, the OSHA representative will give you an initial inspection report, listing the potential violations. Then, a follow-up inspection report will be delivered with a full report of OSHA violations.

How to Prepare For an OSHA Inspection 2021

OSHA recommends that you have gone through verifications of all the procedures and regulatory policies.

Your clinic needs to have written safety plans for:

- Exposure control (Bloodborne pathogens and COVID-19 preparedness and response plan)
- Hazard communication plans for chemical safety
- A hazardous waste management plan (Handling, usage, and disposal)
- An emergency response plan against armed aggressor
- Respiratory protection plan

Disclaimer: Given the novelty of this coronavirus, recommendations from the source references are interim and advisory in nature and is based on current knowledge of the situation.

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