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OSHA updates guidance on masks for vaccinated workers

Posted On: Aug. 16, 2021 9:04 AM CST

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The Occupational Safety and Health Administration on Friday issued new guidance for workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, aligning the agency with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's stance that vaccinated individuals need to wear face masks in areas of high virus transmission.

The CDC on July 27 updated its recommendations for fully vaccinated people to reduce their risk of becoming infected with the Delta variant and potentially spreading it to others. In addition to masks for all in localities with high rates of transmission of COVID-19, the CDC has urged individuals to wear a mask regardless of level of transmission, particularly if individuals are at risk or have someone in their household who is at increased risk of severe disease or is not fully vaccinated.

The CDC and OSHA guidelines also call for all individuals regardless of vaccination status to get tested three to five days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result.

OSHA said its recommendations are "advisory in nature and informational in content and are intended to assist employers in providing a safe and healthful workplace free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm."

