

HR Insights

2026 Occupational Health Compliance Timeline



Introduction

As employers prepare for 2026, the occupational health compliance landscape is entering a period of significant transition. OSHA is advancing updates to long-standing standards, including phased changes to the Hazard Communication Standard, potential adjustments to respiratory protection requirements, and new rules addressing emerging risks such as heat-related illness and workplace violence in healthcare settings.

At the same time, the agency faces budgetary and staffing reductions that are expected to shift enforcement priorities toward high-hazard industries while leaving greater responsibility for compliance on employers themselves. State-plan OSHA programs may further accelerate regulatory activity, creating a patchwork of requirements across jurisdictions.

This timeline highlights the most important milestones expected in 2026, with links to authoritative sources to help organizations anticipate, plan, and adapt their occupational health programs.





January 19th, 2026

OSHA Hazard Communication Standard (HazCom) Update - Phase 1

- Alignment with GHS Rev. 7 (and some Rev. 8).
- Employers must begin updating **SDSs, labeling, and hazard classifications**.
- Full compliance required **by January 19th, 2028**.

Source:

- [ERA Environmental – HazCom Update Timeline \(Sept. 2024\)](#)

Proposed, Subject to Finalization

Respiratory Protection Update

- Possible removal of medical evaluations for filtering facepiece respirators and loose-fitting PAPRs.

Source:

- [OSHA Proposed Deregulatory Rulemaking](#)

General Duty Clause Interpretation

- Proposal to limit § 5(a)(1) use for “inherent hazards.”

Source:

- [Haynes Boone OSHA Regulatory Update](#)

Proposed, Subject to Finalization (cont.)

Workplace Violence Prevention (Healthcare & Social Services)

- Part of OSHA's current regulatory agenda.

Source:

- [Safety+Health Magazine - OSHA Agenda Coverage \(June, 2025\)](#).

Heat Illness/Injury Prevention Standard

- Federal rule under development

Source:

- [Safety+Health Magazine - OSHA Agenda Coverage \(June, 2025\)](#).

Powered Industrial Truck Standard Update

- Modernization proposal.

Source:

- [Safety+Health Magazine - OSHA Agenda Coverage \(June, 2025\)](#).





OSHA Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Reduction

- \$50 million budget cuts, approximately 233 fewer staff.
- Possibly anticipate fewer inspections, with more focus on high-risk sectors.

Sources:

- [Ogletree Deakins - OSHA FY 2026 Budget Review \(July, 2025\).](#)
- [J.J. Keller - OSHA Budget Analysis \(July, 2025\).](#)



Occupational Health Compliance Checklist for HR Professionals (2026)

Hazard Communication (HazCom)

- Review and update Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) to align with OSHA's revised Hazard Communications Standard (GHS Rev. 7)
- Ensure all chemical labels meet new formatting and classifications requirements.
- Provide updated HazCom training to employees as revised SDSs and labels circulate
- Track downstream compliance deadlines leading up to Jan. 19th, 2028.

Respiratory Protection

- Monitor OSHA's rulemaking on respiratory protection medical evaluations; prepare for possible removal of evaluation requirements for certain respirators
- Continue conducting fit testing, training, and hazard assessments per OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134.
- Document any program changes to maintain audit readiness.

Recordkeeping and Reporting

- Maintain compliance with existing OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping rules (Form 300, 300A, and 310)
- Monitor for changes to electronic reporting or rescission of COVID-19 recordkeeping rules in healthcare.
- Audit recordkeeping practices to ensure accurate and timely entries.

Occupational Health Compliance Checklist for HR Professionals (2026)

Enforcements and Audits

- Anticipate fewer but more targeted inspections due to OSHA's reduced budget. Prioritize compliance in high-hazard sectors.
- Conduct internal audits/self-inspections to identify and correct gaps.

State-Level Requirements

- For multi-state employers, monitor state-plan OSHA programs for stricter requirements on heat stress, chemicals, or injury prevention.
- Ensure HR teams in each state are aware of both federal and local obligations.

Workforce Engagement

- Communicate upcoming regulatory changes to employees in plain language.
- Encourage employee feedback on workplace hazards to strengthen compliance and morale.

Strategic Planning

- Align HR policies with ADA, FMLA, and worker's comp where OSH changes intersect with employee health.
- Budget for additional training, policy updates, and technology to manage compliance transitions.
- Document all proactive steps to demonstrate good-faith compliance in case of inspections or audits.

Conclusion

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a pivotal year for occupational health compliance. While some regulatory changes will reduce administrative burdens, others will expand employer responsibilities in areas such as hazard communication, workplace violence prevention, and heat illness protection. Coupled with reduced federal enforcement resources and growing divergence among state-level programs, employers cannot afford a reactive approach.

Organizations that invest early in updating policies, training, and recordkeeping systems will be better positioned to navigate uncertainty, demonstrate compliance during inspections, and safeguard their workforce. By treating 2026 as both a compliance challenge and an opportunity to strengthen safety culture, employers can mitigate risk while reinforcing their commitment to employee health and operational resilience.



Download the Checklist



Share content



Subscribe to Newsletter



Sources

- ERA Environmental. (2024, September). OSHA Hazard Communication Standard update: What you need to know. ERA Environmental Management Solutions. <https://www.era-environmental.com/blog/hazcom-update>
- Haynes and Boone, LLP. (2025, July 2). OSHA issues wave of rules: One final and 25 proposed. Haynes and Boone News Alerts. <https://www.haynesboone.com/news/alerts/osha-issues-wave-of-rules-one-final-and-25-proposed>
- Insurance Journal. (2025, May 5). Federal OSHA vs. state plans: Diverging compliance landscapes. Insurance Journal Magazine. <https://www.insurancejournal.com/magazines/mag-features/2025/05/05/821564.htm>
- J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. (2025, July 18). Reading the tea leaves in OSHA's FY 2026 budget request. J. J. Keller Compliance Network. <https://jjkellercompliancencetwork.com/news/reading-the-tea-leaves-in-oshas-fy-2026-budget-request>
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (2025). Deregulatory rulemaking. U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.osha.gov/deregulatory-rulemaking>
- Ogletree Deakins. (2025, July 15). OSHA's FY 2026 budget justification offers insight into a much smaller agency. Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C. <https://ogletree.com/insights-resources/blog-posts/oshas-fy-2026-budget-justification-offers-insight-into-a-much-smaller-agency/>
- Safety+Health Magazine. (2025, June 27). Multiple changes for OSHA in latest regulatory agenda. National Safety Council. <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/25645-multiple-changes-for-osha-in-latest-regulatory-agenda>



Client Testimonial

“It Just Works!”

JACOB POLLARD
HR Manager, Blue Jacket, Inc.



Built for More than Big Business

BlueHive wasn't built just for billion-dollar enterprises in oil & gas or government. It's for every HR leader trying to give people a better shot at a safer, healthier future - from the nonprofit hiring re-entry candidates fighting for a second chance to the staffing firm placing apprentices on job sites they never dreamed they'd step foot on. Our promise is simple: health compliance shouldn't be a paperwork nightmare or a privilege. It should be a bridge - one that leads to opportunity, dignity, and progress... one screening, one employee, one community at a time.

Let's bring better health compliance to more people!



See How BlueHive Works



Book a Demo



Create My Free Account



Stay Ahead of Compliance

Blueprints for Better Workplaces

industry insights

Compliance Checklist:
What HR Leaders
Need to Know About
OSHA in 2025



2025 OSHA Compliance Checklist

Make sure that you're prepared for 2025 OSHA compliance changes and reporting requirements! This whitepaper includes a printable checklist that you can use to ensure that you're ready for whatever the new year may bring!

[Read more →](#)

industry insights

Your 2025 Compliance & Workplace Companion
Stay ahead of compliance, boost morale, and plan smarter all year!



2025 HR & Compliance Calendar

Check out our 2025 calendar! It's filled with key HR deadlines, compliance dates, and holidays to keep you on track, plus entertaining bee comics every month to add some light-hearted fun to your routine.

[Read more →](#)

industry insights

HR Essentials:
Streamlining Hiring
and Placement for
Staffing Agencies



Best Practices for Staffing Agencies

Do you deal with finding and placing talent? Check out our whitepaper which includes information and best practices to keep your talent compliant and resilient.

[Read more →](#)

industry insights

Medical Clearances for Healthcare Workers:
What HR Professionals in
Critical Access Hospitals
Need to Know



HR Challenges in Critical Access Hospitals

Are you an HR professional in a critical access hospital navigating the challenges of rural, resource-limited settings? This whitepaper will help you discover best practices for maintaining a compliant and prepared workforce.

[Read more →](#)

industry insights

Hospitality Help:
Ensuring Compliance
During Rapid Onboarding
and High Turnover



Compliance in Rapid Onboarding & High Turnover

Dealing with rapid onboarding brought on by rapid turnover in your industry? See how BlueHive can help your team as you strive for compliance excellence, even under challenging circumstances!

[Read more →](#)

industry insights

HR Essentials:
Streamlining Workforce
Compliance in Oil and Gas



Simplifying Compliance in Oil & Gas

The oil and gas industry features a diverse workforce with local and remote workers. This paper discusses how BlueHive can help ensure that your workers remain healthy and compliant, no matter how challenging their location.

[Read more →](#)

For even more compliance and industry insights, subscribe to our blog →



Your All-in-One Platform for Simplified Occupational Health



HRIS Integration

Connect your existing HR platforms to BlueHive, keeping employee rosters up-to-date without extra effort.



Order Creation

Manage various services, set limits, and create recurring orders for physicals, labs, vaccines, and more.



Service Management

Auto-accept referrals, utilize discounted fee schedules, maintain service inventory, and more.



Simplified Invoicing

Easily access your balances and invoices, with the option to make immediate credit card payments.



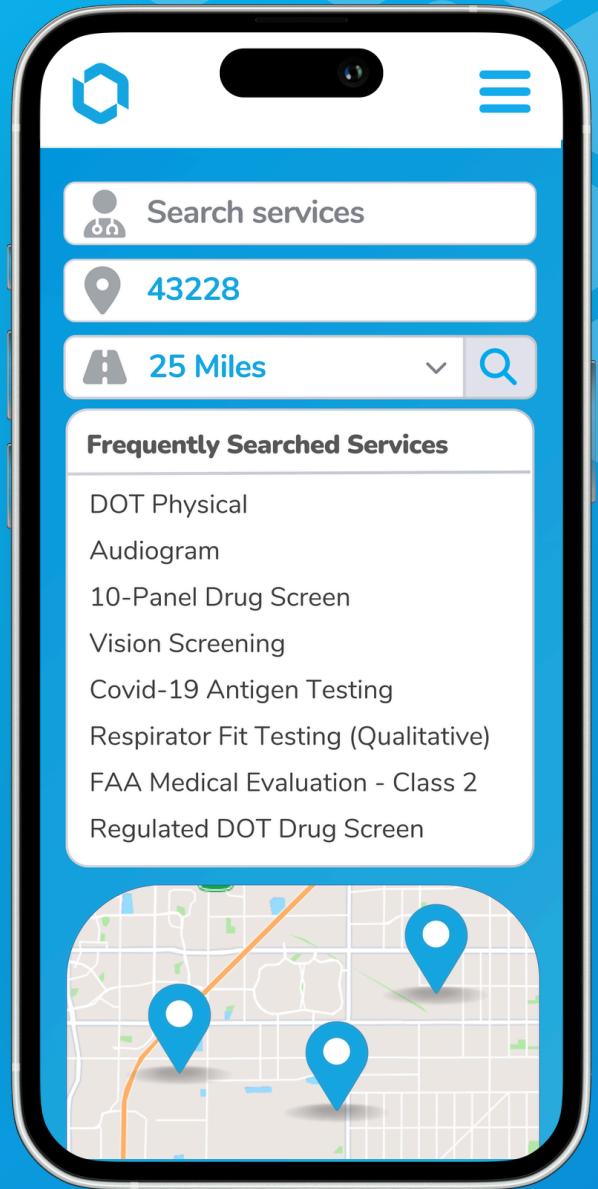
Provider Directory

Access a 18,000+ provider directory, where information, appointments, and pricing are efficiently handled.



Single-Sign On

Customizable SSO authentication and secure emails for results, orders, and direct provider chats.



[Schedule a demo](#)

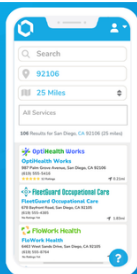


Get to Know BlueHive Better: Watch Our Featured Videos

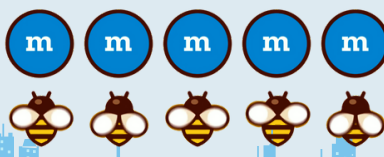


The All-in-One Platform
Connecting Occupational Health and Efficiency

[learn more](#)



BlueHive: An Introduction



The BlueHive Story



Effortless HR Solutions:
Occupational Health Service Sourcing in 3 Simple Steps

[learn more](#)



Service Sourcing in 3 Simple Steps



(260) 217-5328



contact@bluehive.com



bluehive.com