



December 22, 2020

National Organizations Coalesce to Get Industry Vaccinated

Over the last week the national associations we work with including EMA, NACS SIGMA and NATSO have been working to assure that the motor fuel and convenience industries are included in Phase 1B of the Covid 19 vaccination program. See their [letter here](#). Their efforts advanced when the US Centers for Disease Control Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices voted to include industry employees (who had previously been declared essential) in Phase 1-B vaccine priority along with adults older than 75 years. While the Virginia Department of Health and the governor will ultimately determine how the vaccines are distributed, they are expected to heed the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control. We will continue to monitor this situation over the holiday period and will inform the members of any new information on vaccine availability and timelines.

EEOC Says Employers Can Require Vaccination

There are exemptions for disabilities and religious beliefs, the guidance indicates.

From NACS

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) last week issued long-awaited [guidance](#) indicating that employers can require most of their employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine in order to ensure a safe workplace.

The commission noted that although the Americans with Disabilities Act limits an employer's ability to require employees to undergo a medical examination unless job-related and a business necessity, receiving a vaccine doesn't constitute a medical exam.

Under the section, ADA and Vaccinations, the EEOC states, "Managers and supervisors responsible for communicating with employees about compliance with the employer's vaccination requirement should know how to recognize an accommodation request from an employee with a disability and know to whom the request should be referred for consideration."

Regarding refusing vaccination on religious grounds, the EEOC states, "Once an employer is on notice that an employee's sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance prevents the employee from receiving the vaccination, the employer must provide a reasonable accommodation for the religious belief, practice, or observance unless it would pose an undue

hardship under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.”

Read the full EEOC guidance [document here](#).

USDA Offers \$22 Million in Grants to Marketers for Higher Blend Ethanol and Biodiesel Infrastructure

From EMA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced it is reopening the application process for the Higher Blend Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIIP) for marketers seeking grants to install or upgrade higher blend ethanol and/or biodiesel fueling infrastructure. The application period opens on December 21, 2020 and ends on January 19, 2021. The purpose of the HBIIIP program is to increase the sales of E15 or higher ethanol blends biodiesel blends greater than five percent. The USDA is making \$22 million available for both retail and wholesale higher blend infrastructure. HBIIIP grants cover up to 50 percent of total eligible project costs up to three million dollars for equipment upgrades at retail fueling facilities, biodiesel distribution facilities, including biodiesel terminal operations and home heating oil distribution centers or equivalent entities. Eligible Project Costs are only those costs incurred through December 31, 2020 and that are directly related to the use and purposes of the HBIIIP. The HBIIIP application process is lengthy. Applicants are encouraged to start the application process as early as possible before the 30-day period ends.

Applications must be filed online by clicking on “To Apply” at: [HBIIIP Application](#).

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from VPCMA

We extend our best wishes to all for a safe and happy holiday season. Thank you for all of your support in 2020.

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