



BBA employee and client safety guidelines:

COVID 19 & The Delta Variant

Braun-Bostich & Associates Response Update – August 2021

The spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of Covid-19 is causing infections and hospitalizations to rise again in the United States, even in communities with high vaccination rates. Hopes that the pandemic would soon fade away have been dimmed by the spread of the variant, which appears to evade at least some of the immunity conferred by past infection or vaccination. And with low global vaccination rates, there are likely to be new variants that could be even more threatening. Consequently, the experts expect sporadic cases and periodic outbreaks of Covid-19 in the months and years ahead. Given this prospect, BBA continues to recognize its obligation to protect its staff, clients, and communities.

As the virus has evolved, we have honed our strategies to keep infections in check. By continuing to be creative, flexible, and adaptive in our approaches, we are confident that we can contain the threat now and handle outbreaks as they may arise. Here are some broad measures we've applied.

Safety Guidelines *(in close adherence with current CDC recommendations)*

Encouraging Vaccination

Vaccination remains the best way to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, or death from Covid-19, and BBA has overwhelmingly communicated and encouraged its staff to get vaccinated – which all have done.

Consideration of Local Transmission Rates Regarding Remote vs. In-Office Worker Decisions

As most know, the risk of workplace Covid-19 transmission is highly correlated with the community infection rate. As of April 2021, we've felt comfortable about bringing remote workers back to the office and remain comfortable only as current weekly infection rates remain low within the communities where we work and live. However, should weekly infection rates rise to a level where the likelihood that an employee will bring Covid-19 into the workplace increases, we will take measures to reduce that risk. We will do this by implementing either a total remote work environment or through hybrid work and staggered schedules.

Reduce Exposure through Social Distancing

Flexible schedules and remote work have helped create adequate social distancing throughout the worst of the pandemic. We continuing to use behavioral techniques to "nudge" employees

to maintain social distancing at the workplace for their own protection as well as that of our clients.

Improve Ventilation

We are cognizant that office ventilation impacts transmission and increasing the amount of air that's exchanged indoors decreases the likelihood of infection in the workplace. Improved ventilation has been and will continue to be a priority as we have added several air exchange systems throughout the office that will remain in place.

Decide When to Recommend or Require Masks

We recognize that masks provide protection against both being infected with Covid-19 and infecting others. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all unvaccinated people wear masks when indoors with others. Those with any degree of immune compromise, including those undergoing cancer treatment, taking immunosuppressive drugs, or who have had organ transplant, should also continue to wear well-fitting masks indoors – a protectionary measure that we fully endorse. With the Delta variant's rapid spread, more and more localities have reinstated universal indoor masking, and some healthy vaccinated employees may choose to wear masks indoors or work remotely, if possible, during any local outbreaks. We expect indoor mask mandates to expand with increased infection rates.

Encourage Testing

BBA will continue to encourage testing given the level of Delta variant spread. Antigen tests are now readily available, the cost is modest, and results are available in real time. Employees know that they can now test themselves at home and can arrange follow-up confirmatory tests if no symptoms are presented but are they test positive. All employees have been instructed not to come to the workplace if they feel ill.

Communicate Exposures

As workplaces continue to experience Covid-19 cases over the coming months. We remain committed to communicate honestly about exposures that may surface at our office, while respecting the medical privacy of employees who have reported that they have Covid-19. Vaccinated employees who are exposed to Covid-19 may not be required to quarantine if asymptomatic.

Stay Current on the Effectiveness of Interventions

Last, we are keeping up to date on which interventions to limit the spread of Covid-19 are effective and which ones have limited value. While we no longer see the need for temperature screenings as they have been proven to be ineffective in decreasing workplace transmission, we continue to provide masks and hand sanitizer for staff and clients. Similarly, we now know that normal cleaning is adequate to protect against Covid-19 infections in most instances, and disinfection can be reserved for high-touch, high-traffic surfaces. Covid-19 has been a humanitarian tragedy and has upended business plans across the globe. Unfortunately, the pandemic is not going to end imminently. Consequently, our team will continue to remain nimble in how we cope with it. As the local situation dictates, BBA will remain vigilant and implement existing and new processes that are proven to keep employees, clients, and communities safe.

Every precaution will continue to be taken to ensure that *employee* and *client* safety measures reduce liability and mitigate the risk of further business interruptions, and most importantly, the well-being of all parties.

As we shift our virus mitigation protocols to combat this lethal variant, we will continue to keep you informed of any changes. We believe these updated measures will allow us to put health and safety first and adapt as required moving forward.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of our associates at your convenience.

Employee/Client Privacy

With the increased emphasis on employee symptoms and health screenings, BBA will be mindful of employee and client privacy rights.

Although as an employer BBA is entitled to ask questions, require testing, and conduct screening designed to protect their workforce from infection, all information gathered from such screenings will be treated confidentiality. Human resources personnel or another supervisor trained in employee privacy protocol will conduct any such employee screening and ensure that information is handled like all other confidential employee personnel information.

If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, BBA will inform all other employees that a co-worker tested positive but will not disclose the identity of the employee without their consent. The infected employee must also provide a list of all people they had contact with in the past 14 days (employees, clients, vendors, contractors, etc.) so those people can be informed that they were in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and take necessary precautions.