

Meat plants not subject to new COVID-19 workplace safety rules

By [Peter Thomas Ricci](#) 6/14/2021



The meat industry will not be subject to new COVID-19 workplace safety rules, according to [testimony](#) from Labor Secretary Marty Walsh.

Speaking to the House Education and Labor Committee on June 9, Walsh indicated that the new safety rules will only be required for healthcare workers, while it will be optional guidance for other industries.

“OSHA has tailored a rule that focuses on health care, that science tells us that health care workers — particularly those who have come into regular contact with people either suspected of having or being treated for COVID-19 — are most at risk,” Walsh said during the hearing. “We also expect to release some updated guidance for general industry, which also reflects the CDC’s latest guidance and tells employers how to protect workers who have not yet been vaccinated.”

Dating back to the opening week of the Biden administration, OSHA was directed to draft new emergency temporary standards for workplaces, and the rules were [expected](#) to apply to all workplaces. In a [statement](#), UFCW International President Marc Perrone expressed disappointment with the safety rules.

“Today’s new COVID workplace safety standard from OSHA represents a broken promise to the millions of American workers in grocery stores and meatpacking plants who have gotten sick and died on the front lines of this pandemic,” Perrone stated. “Vaccinations are helping us take control of this pandemic, but the danger for these essential workers is far from over. Thousands of frontline food workers are still at risk of infection.”