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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Virginia Leads the Nation in COVID-19 Protocol**
All Virginia employers MUST comply by August 26, 2020.

August 21, 2020…McLean, VA…Virginia leads the nation with its current mandates laying down strict workplace standards in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak titled the **COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard** (Standard). The Standard is applicable to most employers, and all state-owned and operated businesses and offices.

Virginia employers MUST comply with the Standard by August 26, 2020. Compliance requires the implementation of written policies, procedures and employee training, and these documents are not optional. The Standard makes this documentation mandatory. Failure to comply could result in fines as high as $135,000 for repeat or willful violations, depending upon the severity of the violation.

As stated by Virginia Governor Ralph Northam, “Keeping Virginians safe at work is not only a critical part of stopping the spread of the virus, it’s key to our economic recovery and it’s the right thing to do.”

“This is newsworthy because Virginia is the only state requiring this at this point,” adds Merritt Green, Founder/Managing Partner of McLean-based legal firm General Counsel, P.C. “It is a way for businesses to overcome and emerge stronger through the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The Standard establishes requirements for employers to control, prevent, and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Some of the measures include:

* Self-ranking the business with exposure categories;
* Preventive and response plans;
* Preventive measures;
* Employee training;
* Return-to-work plans; and
* Retaliation protection

**Access to the Forms Generator**

To facilitate the process, General Counsel, P.C., in conjunction with Business Compliance, LLC, has developed the COVID-19 Virginia Emergency Standard Forms Generator (“VES Forms Generator”) to help Virginia employers easily and inexpensively comply with the standards. The VES Forms Generator can be accessed through: <https://www.generalcounsellaw.com/ves_forms_generator/> or [www.covidcomplianceplans.com](http://www.covidcomplianceplans.com).

The VES Forms Generator provides the tools and documents employers can use to comply with the Virginia COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard. Employers must implement the policies, procedures and training.

Avoiding fines is only one reason to ensure a company is in compliance with the Standard. It is just as important to demonstrate to employees and clients a company’s commitment to their health and safety. Compliance with the Standard also shows a good faith effort by a business to protect its employees and customers that could be used to defend legal claims against a company (an affirmative defense). On the other hand, failure to comply could be used as evidence to establish liability since minimum governmental standards were not satisfied.

The COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard was issued on July 15, 2020, as published by Virginia’s Department of Labor and Industry. The new measures took effect on July 27, 2020. The deadline for compliance is August 26, 2020.

([Click here to view §16VAC25-220, Emergency Temporary Standard](https://www.doli.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COVID-19-Emergency-Temporary-Standard-FOR-PUBLIC-DISTRIBUTION-FINAL-7.17.2020.pdf)).

**Media: For More Information**

For more information about Virginia’s COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard, please contact Merritt Green, Founder and Managing Partner of General Counsel, P.C., a McLean, VA-based, full-service law firm providing comprehensive legal services for business ranging from start-up to multi-billion dollar organizations. Contact Mr. Green at 703-556-0411 or mgreen@gcpc.com; [www.generalcounsellaw.com](http://www.generalcounsellaw.com).

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