



What's New in **BENEFITS & I** **COMPENSATION**

The leading service to keep benefits managers up to date

November 1, 2021

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HRMORNING

Keep Up To Date with the Latest HR News

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HRMorning, part of the SuccessFuel Network, provides the latest HR and benefits and employment law news for HR professionals in the trenches of small-to-medium-sized businesses. Rather than simply regurgitating the day's headlines, **HRMorning** delivers actionable insights, helping HR execs understand what HR trends mean to their business.

Top 5 compliance issues for vaccine incentives/surcharges

■ Presidential mandate won't eliminate issue

One of the hot topics among Benefits professionals is: Can their firm implement a surcharge for people who aren't vaccinated and have the firm's health insurance coverage, and if so how much can they charge?

The topic really took flight when Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian revealed he planned to increase employee's share of the healthcare premium by \$200 a month for those who refused to get vaccinated.

Things to think about

It's important to remind everyone that the EEOC issued guidance (see bit.ly/EEOC637) noting most vaccine

premium incentives and surcharges won't present problems under the ADA or GINA.

But with more companies exploring this avenue of encouraging their holdouts to get vaccinated, here are five compliance issues you need to take into consideration.

1. Vaccine administration

Firms shouldn't take part in administering the COVID-19 vaccine. That means you shouldn't provide the vaccine to employees through your own workforce or a third-part vendor on your behalf.

(Please turn to Compliance ... Page 2)

HEALTH CARE

Study: People who need HSAs aren't participating

In 2020, 13% of people age 50 to 80 delayed getting medical care due to being worried about cost. And 12% who actually needed medical care didn't get it because they couldn't afford it.

That's according to the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging. It surveyed a national sample of adults aged 50-80 about their concerns affording needed health care.

Have and have nots

Health savings accounts (HSA) can help this group afford the care they need. But of the respondents, only 7% had an HSA. And among the 21% who had a high-deductible health plan (HDHP), only 45% had an HSA.

Also, it was more common for people in the 50-64 age range (12%) to have an HSA, than compared to people 65-80 (1%). And people with at least a bachelor's degree were more likely to have one (13%) than those with a high school or less education (3%). Finally, 13% of respondents with household incomes of at least \$100,000 had an HSA compared to less than 2% of those with a household income of \$30,000.

Targeting these groups and providing easy-to-understand info on HSAs, can keep these employees healthier and in the long run cut down on your company's healthcare costs.

Info: bit.ly/HSA637

Compliance ...

(continued from Page 1)

To avoid incentive or surcharge limitations under the ADA or GINA, make sure employees receive their vaccines from a pharmacy, public health department or healthcare provider that's not tied to your firm in any way.

2. HIPAA/ACA

COVID-19 vaccine incentives and surcharges can't exceed 30% of the total cost of an employee's health insurance premiums under HIPAA/ACA wellness program rules.

Employers are also required to offer alternative standards to get the incentive or avoid the surcharge for people who have difficulty getting the vaccine due to a medical condition or for who it's medically inadvisable.

3. ACA affordability

Firms can't take into account any discount or surcharge avoided by being vaccinated when ascertaining its lowest-cost plan expense. The

reason being, it can cause your company to accidentally "move out of the automatic passing grade offered through the federal poverty line affordability safe harbor (and the associated streamlined reporting

Incentives and surcharges can't exceed 30% of health premiums.

through the qualifying offer method). In addition, it can trigger "B Penalty" liability because it caused the affordability of your coverage to fall below the rate of pay safe harbor.

4. Religious accommodations

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act requires employers to provide a reasonable accommodation – unless it would pose undue hardship – if an employee says they can't get the COVID-19 vaccine due to a "sincerely held religious" belief, practice or observance. It may be hard to discern if something is a "sincerely held religious belief," but it's probably a good practice to assume it is. And at that point you should partake in an interactive dialogue with the employee to determine a reasonable accommodation that's suitable for the employee and the firm.

5. Biden's ETS

Don't think President Biden's Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) requiring COVID-19 vaccination or weekly testing for employees of firms with a 100-plus people (See the Oct. 15, 2021 issue), will make the vaccine incentive/surcharge a moot point. The ETS will only be around for six months, and it doesn't include employees' families. Plus, industry experts predict it'll face legal challenges – all of it will affect the ETS's effectiveness.

For more information, go to bit.ly/Surcharge637.

SHARPEN YOUR BENEFITS JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

■ Worker blames injuries on ergonomically correct set up?

"Hi, Rhonda. How was your weekend?" asked Benefits Manager Betty Murphy.

"It was good," said Rhonda, a customer service rep. "I pretty much took it easy."

"We could all use weekends like that," said Betty. "In fact, ..."

"I took it easy because I had no choice," interrupted Rhonda. "My elbow and shoulder pain are so bad I made a doctor's appointment."

"That's awful," said Betty. "How did you injure them?"

Bad work set up?

"I injured them by working here," said Rhonda.

"What?" exclaimed Betty. "You've been here less than six months. How's that possible?"

"Because of the crappy work set up I have," said Rhonda.

"How can it be crappy?" asked Betty. "It's ergonomically correct. We did research on it because of all the typing and phone work our reps do."

"We'll see what the doctor says," said Rhonda. "I never had problems until I started working here."

"I'm truly sorry you're hurting," said Betty. "Please let me know what your doctor says."

Rhonda's doctor said her injuries were in line with the job duties, so she applied for workers' comp and was granted it by a workers' comp law judge.

The company and its worker's comp carrier appealed. Who won?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.*

HRMORNING'S

What's New in **BENEFITS & COMPENSATION**

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Companies thought they could get away with not paying workers OT

This regular feature highlights recent case settlements, court awards and fines against companies. It serves as a reminder to keep benefits policies in order.

Hospital underpaid their heroes during pandemic

What happened: In Linden, TN, Expertus Health LLC – operator of Perry Community Hospital – cheated essential healthcare workers out of their pay.

What people did: An investigation by the DOL found the hospital missed three payrolls in November of 2020 leading to FLSA minimum wage and OT violations. It also deducted break time from employees work hours. In addition, the facility:

- paid employees straight time for hours worked and failed to pay OT
- failed to include earned bonuses, in the calculation of overtime pay, and
- misclassified an employee as an independent contractor.

Result: The DOL recovered \$163,785 in back wages for 72 workers.

Info: bit.ly/Hospital637

Owner of truck stops made numerous FLSA violations

What happened: Mohammad Tahir – owner and manager of Promised Land Truck Stop in Tafton, PA, and Whistle Stop convenience store in Greentown, PA – violated FLSA minimum wage, overtime and recordkeeping requirements.

What people did: A DOL investigation found Tahir failed to pay workers at the Tafton location for time spent counting cash drawers and completing reports, and took deductions from workers' pay for cash drawer shortages, making their pay less than federal minimum wage. At the Greentown store, workers were paid straight time. Several workers, identified as assistant managers, were paid

a fixed salary and had deductions made from their pay when they worked fewer than 50 hours.

Result: The DOL recovered \$42,265 in back wages for 47 Promised Land Truck Stop workers and \$17,424 in back wages for 18 Whistle Stop employees, plus an equal amount in damages.

Info: bit.ly/TruckStops637

Employees who worked 75 hours weren't paid OT

What happened: APS Market & Grill LLC – a combined restaurant, grocery store and butcher shop that operates as Taqueria La Sierra in Selbyville, DE – paid a flat salary to some of its workers and didn't keep time records.

What people did: After an investigation, the DOL determined the employer paid employees a fixed salary for all hours worked. Some employees worked more than 75 hours.

Result: The business operator has to pay \$300,000 in back wages and liquidated damages to 16 workers, as well as a \$5,000 penalty.

Info: bit.ly/Restaurant637

12-hour shifts, 7 days a week and still no OT pay

What happened: A Swedesboro, NJ company violated the FLSA when it didn't pay workers for OT.

What people did: Headquartered in Jiangsu, China, JP Technology Inc., the operator of a 24-hour hafnium crystal bar production facility, had employees who worked 12-hour shifts, seven days a week and paid them straight time. DOL investigators saw the employees being exposed to chemical hazards and informed OSHA.

Result: In all, \$114,656 in back wages and liquidated damages were recovered for seven employees.

Info: bit.ly/Hafnium637

■ Pandemic increased drinking: How to talk about it at work

The past year and a half have been incredibly stressful and isolating for many people, and it's no surprise many turned to alcohol to help cope.

According to a study done by the National Institutes of Health, 60% of American adults' alcohol consumption increased during the pandemic – and 46% said stress was the reason for it.

Alcohol tends to be a touchy subject and isn't normally discussed at work, but drinking can affect work performance, whether it be absenteeism, presenteeism, under performance or mood swings.

Not to mention, it can negatively impact employees' health long term.

Tackling it head-on

It's important for HR and Benefits pros to not shy away from the subject of alcohol. Here's how to address drinking (and not drinking) at work, according to co-founders of the nonprofit Bee Sober, Lisa Elsworth and Alexandria Walker, which they shared at the 2021 SHRM annual conference.

The most important thing leaders can do is destigmatize *not* drinking. Elsworth and Walker say many people assume if someone doesn't drink they have alcoholism, which isn't always true.

Leaders can help reduce alcohol talk at work that can make non-drinkers uncomfortable. For example, ban phrases like, "You look like you could use a drink." Be careful about implications drinking is necessary to relax or have fun.

Another important thing to do is have plenty of non-alcoholic drink options at parties or events. There's nothing worse than a sober person's only beverage option being water.

And it's crucial for leaders to be vigilant for any signs of alcohol abuse. If an employee is frequently looking hungover or appears to be drinking during the daytime, it's important to take action.

Best practices to take for finding missing plan participants

For whatever reason, not all former employees when they reach retirement age know they have money left in a company’s 401(k). And as the fiduciary of their retirement plans, firms have a responsibility to find these missing plan participants with account balances.

The DOL’s Employee Benefits Security Administration devised a list of best practices for employers to follow so plan participants and beneficiaries receive their benefits when they reach retirement age.

Pick appropriate steps

Plan fiduciaries don’t have to take every step below, and they *aren’t* listed in order of importance.

Firms should choose the steps they take based on size of a participant’s accrued benefit and account balance, as well as the cost of search efforts.

1. **Periodically update current and retired beneficiaries’ contact info** (home and business addresses, telephone numbers, social media info and next of kin/emergency info). Consider including contact

info change requests in plan communications. And flag any mail that’s returned undeliverable.

2. **Communicate effectively.** Use plain language, offer non-English language assistance, state upfront what the communication is about (e.g., pension benefit payments), and mark correspondence with original plan or sponsor’s name.
3. **Create a plan for locating missing participants.** Check all company contact info first (e.g., a group health plan may have more accurate info). Reach out to plan beneficiaries (e.g., spouse, children) and emergency contacts. And check free online search engines, public record databases, obituaries and social media.
4. It’s vital to keep a record of all the steps and actions you take to locate missing participants. It shows the DOL you’re making the a good-faith effort to track missing participants.

Additional info on all steps can be found at bit.ly/DOL637

Keys to communicating with 5 difficult personalities

In Benefits you work with many people every day.

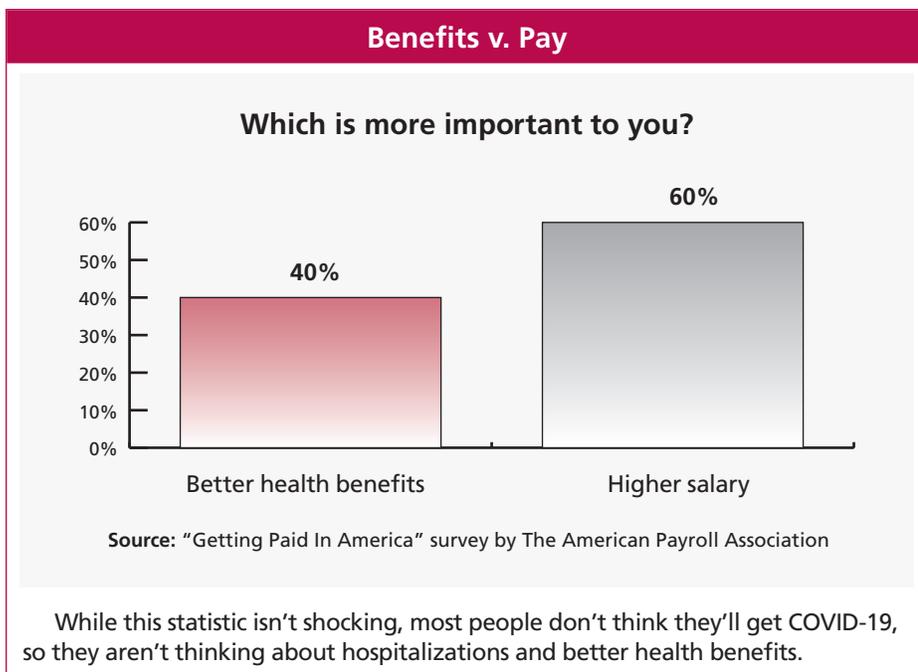
Some are more difficult than others. And communicating with them can be even more difficult.

Best practices

Here are five of the toughest personalities to handle – and how to deal with them:

- **Aggressors** try to dominate conversations and control situations. They’re know-it-alls who are usually close-minded. *To deal:* Call them out. Say, “You’re yelling. Do you mean to? If so, I’m not going to engage with you.”
- **Victims** complain, whine and blame others when something goes wrong. *To deal:* Put a number on their actions. Say, “Do you realize you dropped seven complaints in the one minute we’ve been talking?” then refocus them: “I think that means it’s time to focus on solutions.”
- **Perfectionists** have high standards for themselves and everyone around them – whether it’s necessary or not. They might waste time and resources on perfecting things that don’t need to be. *To deal:* Work together to set realistic goals, deadlines and consequences for not following through the way they should.
- **Procrastinators** wait until the last minute to do everything, stressing many people and causing some panic. *To deal:* Help them break work into smaller, manageable pieces. Then praise good work done on time.
- **Rescuers** help everyone to their detriment. They over commit and miss deadlines. *To deal:* Remind them what’s on their plate. when it’s due and the time commitments involved.

Info: Paul Thornton, author of Leadership: Perfecting Your Approach and Style, bit.ly/Personalities637



WHAT WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

Our readers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular section, three of them share success stories you can adapt to fit your needs.

1 **'Culture Code' helped us hire better-fitting people**

Hiring the right people for the right job isn't easy. And we always knew it was a two-way street.

We needed to bring in top talent who fit our roles and culture.

On the other hand, candidates wanted to work at companies that fit their needs, goals and hopes. We needed to find a way to accommodate our needs and their need.

But sometimes we found it difficult to be sure the candidates and our culture aligned.

That led us to create a "Culture Code."

It was a solid description of the culture we envisioned and worked to build at our company.

Not only would it help us stay the course, it would help candidates figure out early if they would be happy working for us, or if they wanted to self-eliminate.

Shared it early and often

So we sent candidates our Culture Code – which included some ideals such as kindness, integrity,

fairness, clarity, efficiency, data, pragmatism, ownership, progress and positivity – early in the hiring process.

Documenting our team culture has been extremely enlightening.

It's helped us hire great people who fit in and enhance our culture as we grow. This also means that we're bringing in people who can influence the company in their own way, but at the same time adhere to our value system and our vision.

(Thibaud Clement, CEO, Loomly, Los Angeles)

**REAL
PROBLEMS
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 **Made sure remote workers were happy**

We found employees across industries and companies – including ours – struggled with work/life balance during the pandemic.

One study found 42% of employees are less satisfied with their lives. Much of that was because of work.

Many employees who work from home felt they spent extra time preparing for work, felt alone working remotely and spent less time with family and friends.

We wanted to help them prosper.

We felt one of the most effective ways was through communication with their managers about their well-being.

What's troubling at work?

To help employees regain happiness in life, we encouraged their managers to find out what makes them unhappy at work.

So they:

- checked in with their people who work remotely at least once a week

- asked employees about what was their biggest work challenge, and

- tried to do something to curb or alleviate it.

This approach helped our employees achieve better balance between their work duties and their personal lives. And the cherry on top was they appreciated the time managers took to help them.

(Sara Sutton, founder and CEO of FlexJobs, Boulder, CO)

3 **Unique perk helps morale, perspective**

With more remote and hybrid work these days, many of the perks that once helped boost morale aren't relevant now.

Just think about it. People aren't hanging out to play ping pong and pool in the lounge area. They aren't feasting in the stocked break room.

And they aren't going to after-hour events because they're barely ever in the office together now.

We all hoped that maybe we can

enjoy those things again someday. But we just don't know.

One thing remained the same: Employees still want to do what they like to do.

And that's what inspired us to offer a perk that suits their likes.

You choose where, when

To stay relevant and boost morale, we offered employees a yearly vacation on the company's expense.

They also got leave credit to use for the trip or otherwise.

They got to choose where and when – and we sent them off with the best wishes.

Because we believe well-being and leisure go hand-in-hand, we want them to completely disconnect from work so they come back better than ever.

This perk helps them recharge and gain new perspectives. And it gives us happy, motivated employees.

(Daisy Jing, Founder, Banish, Los Angeles, shared this success on SmallBizTrends)

LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Remote work: Things to consider

For most companies out there, remote work and hybrid arrangements are the new normal.

During the pandemic, you likely created remote work policies and procedures on the fly, but now with some stability returning, it's important to create solid, permanent policies.

But drafting these policies isn't so simple. There can be health, safety and diversity concerns. Not to mention, you'll want the policy to fit with your culture and be legally compliant.

Effective and compliant

Here are five tips on how to create effective, compliant remote work policies, courtesy of employment law attorneys Marjorie Culver and Caitlin Lane of the firm Seyfarth Shaw LLP.

1. **Document arrangements.** It's important to put in writing everyone's remote work arrangement. Each employee has unique circumstances and different needs – it'd be impossible to keep track of it all without documenting it.

And when it comes to hiring new employees, you'll likely want to incorporate remote work language into their offer letter and contracts.

2. **Be careful with cross-border work arrangements.** Remote work may sound like employees can work from anywhere in the world, but it's not always that easy.

There could be corporate and income tax issues as well as data security concerns. Another simple problem that could arise is time zone differences.

3. **Understand employer expenses.** You could be legally obligated to pay for certain at-home expenses for your remote employees.

It's also important for employers and employees to be on the same page about what equipment is needed to do the job. Stipends and allowances should also be discussed.

4. **Evaluate health and safety issues.** Employers are still responsible for providing employees with safe working environments, even at home. While employees' homes have fewer risks than physical workplaces, new issues can crop up.

For example, feelings of isolation and depression can be a bigger issue with remote employees, and employers should be prepared to help address these the same way they would a physical safety issue.

work station that kept her from moving her shoulders and elbows to prevent repetitive injuries. Her condition was caused by how she configured the workspace and used the equipment rather than the repetitive motion of typing.

The court rejected the carrier's argument and agreed that the employee was entitled to benefits.

Wellness takes more than the right equipment

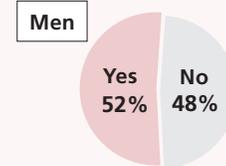
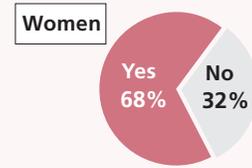
While the employer seemed to do everything right for its customer service reps, it didn't make sure they were using the equipment properly.

It's a good idea to give manager wellness checklists it can distribute to employees. It should include things like reminding workers to get up periodically to stretch, take a walk and decompress. It should also remind them to report any repetitive aches and pains to their supervisors.

Cite: *Bigdoski v. Bausch & Lomb*, No. 532098, 2021 WL 3916884 (N.Y. App. Div. 9/2/21). Dramatized for effect.

Burn out

Are you experiencing burnout?



Source: The Hartford Financial Services Group Inc.

Working mothers are struggling more with remote work than their counterparts. The study also found people who are burned out were more likely to look for another job! Key to keeping them: flexibility.

(Each issue of WNB&C contains a current survey to give benefits officers insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.)

5. **Use remote work as recruitment tool.** Not only can this policy help you attract new talent, it can help you increase diversity at your company. Employees who have trouble leaving the house, whether it be because they're disabled or caretakers, will be able to join your team. In your policy, think about how you'd present this perk to prospective talent.

Info: bit.ly/remotetegal637

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(See case on Page 2.)

The court upheld the decision to award workers' comp benefits to Rhonda.

Her orthopedist testified on her behalf, saying that her account of developing symptoms while typing was consistent with her injuries and showed a causal relationship between the two.

The court said it was within the workers' comp board's authority to credit the testimony of the employee's orthopedist, and that testimony provided adequate support for the conclusion that the employee suffered from an occupational disease.

The company's workers' comp carrier argued the company couldn't be held responsible for Rhonda's injuries because they provided her with an ergonomically correct

Student loan benefit helped ease stress, boost 401(k) participation

■ Offering debt assistance solve two problems at once

We've grown pretty fast, going from three employees 10 years ago to over 300 today. And in the HR department, we've gone from just me to seven full-time staff.

The added staff allows us to focus on recruiting, and as part of our talent acquisition process, we do a lot of outreach, looking to increase diversity and skill sets.

Our industry skews pretty young, so a big part of that effort includes expanding our college recruiting to a broader set of schools.

In the early days, we hired a lot of alumni from the universities that our senior leadership attended.

We realized a few years ago that many of our new hires are coming out of college with considerable student loan debt, and we needed to figure out how to help them deal with it.

Debt impacts everyone

It was clear that the stress of those big financial obligations was hurting our productivity, and not just for the employees who were dealing with it personally – it was spilling over to the whole team.

Aside from those issues, we also recognized that many of our employees simply couldn't afford to participate in our 401(k) benefit.

We have a pretty generous match: up to 4% of salary, but participation was stuck at around 67% and we couldn't get it to budge.

When we talked with our benefits vendors, they suggested that helping with student loans would likely increase participation, so we started looking at how we might structure a program.

We decided to do a straight student

loan subsidy, rather than tying it directly to the 401(k) plan.

We ended up offering two options: a student loan payment and a college savings subsidy.

Right now, we only subsidize personal loans – we haven't added parent loan repayment help – although we may potentially do that in the future.

There are tax implications for both employees and the company, so we made sure we structured the program to deliver the full benefit we intended.

Case Study:

WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T

Boost in participation

We're so thrilled that the program is working as we'd hoped.

With the loan assistance, participants are now able to direct more of their earnings to retirement.

Participation in the 401(k) jumped from 67% of our team at the beginning of the year to 82% by the end of the year.

It's continued increasing, too – we're at 87% participation today.

Always on the lookout

Even though the student loan benefit doesn't directly apply to every single employee, we think that by helping eliminate that stress for many of our people, everyone benefits from a more relaxed workplace.

And our team recognizes that we're always looking for new ways to help all of them thrive, whether its through our health-related subsidies for gym memberships and other health-related purchases or unlimited PTO.

(Laura Rodnitzky, chief people officer, 3Q Digital, Chicago)

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

■ ACA reporting is not like it used to be: Changes for 2021

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) reporting deadlines will be here before you know it. The issue this year is changes have been made.

Find out if you're up on the changes by testing your knowledge: Decide whether the following statements are *True* or *False*. Then check your responses against the answers below.

1. It's extra important this year to make sure that the info you report on Forms 1094-C and 1095-C to the IRS is 100% error-free because 2020 was the last year for the good-faith relief from errors.
2. It's extremely unlikely that anyone will be excluded from electronic filing for Forms 1094-C and 1095-C for the 2021 reporting season which occurs in 2022.
3. The affordability threshold for 2022 is staying the same as 2021.

ANSWERS

1. **True.** Last year in its Notice 2020-76 – the Notice that extended the good-faith relief and extended the deadline to furnish the Forms 1095-C to employees – the IRS stated 2020 would be the last year it would be extending the good-faith relief and deadline extension. To avoid penalties firms need to make sure what they're reporting is accurate and on time. Requisite employees need to have Form 1095-C by Jan. 31, 2022.
2. **True.** Proposed regs by the Department of Treasury would make electronic reporting for the Forms 1094-C and 1095-C mandatory for all applicable large employers beginning with the 2021 reporting season
3. **False.** The affordability threshold in 2021 is 9.83% and will decrease to 9.61% in 2022.
Info: bit.ly/ACA637
- Answers to the quiz

LATEST BENEFITS NEWS

Covered contract workers: DOL raises minimum wage

The DOL recently updated the minimum wage for workers doing work on or in connection with covered contracts.

Executive Order 13658 increases the minimum wage rate from \$10.95 to \$11.25 per hour.

It also raises the rate employers must pay tipped employees performing work on or in connection with covered contracts to \$7.90 per hour. Both new rates are effective Jan. 1, 2022.

The Federal Register notice also states, covered contracts that are “entered into on or after Jan. 30, 2022 – or that are renewed or extended on or after Jan. 30, 2022 – will be generally subject to a higher minimum wage rate of \$15 per hour established by Executive Order 14026, ‘Increasing the Minimum Wage for Federal Contractors,’ signed by President Biden on April 27, 2021.”

Info: bit.ly/RateChange637

Tax credit available if you can hire from specific group

You can snag your firm a tax credit by hiring U.S. job seekers who’ve “consistently faced barriers to employment,” according to the DOL.

The work opportunity tax credit (WOTC) – a federal tax credit – is available to employers that hire people in a WOTC targeted group, who are :

- qualified IV-A recipients
- qualified veteran ex-felons
- designated community residents (DCR)
- vocational rehabilitation referrals
- summer youth employees
- supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) recipients
- supplemental security income (SSI) recipients
- long-term family assistance recipients, and
- qualified long-term unemployment recipients.

You must apply for and receive a

certification verifying the new hire is a member of a targeted group before you can claim the tax credit.

Go to bit.ly/WOTC637 to find out how to claim the tax credit.

Info: bit.ly/TaxCredit637

Flexible schedule still tops list of most desired benefit

A new study shows employees still want more benefit options, with flexibility topping the list. And more than half (56%) of the study respondents aren’t happy with the work benefit changes their employers have made during the pandemic.

The study, “Working in the New Normal Survey” by HealthEquity, a health savings account (HSA) administrator, garnered responses from more than 1,000 Americans who transitioned from working on-site to working remotely.

Not surprising, the top desired benefit was flexibility. Sixty-six percent said they want to keep working remotely – at least part time – after the pandemic. Less than one-quarter (23%) said they want to return to the office full time.

The top reasons for wanting to work remotely: 51% said decreased commuting time and 42% said decreased commuting costs.

So if you’re trying to get people back in the office, consider offering some type of commuting stipend.

Info: bit.ly/Flexibility637

IRS: Firms need to watch for misclassified workers

The IRS wants employers to make sure workers are properly classified as employees or independent contractors.

Be sure to consider how much control your company has over the person’s duties, how the worker is paid (including expense reimbursement) and the terms of any written contracts (e.g., benefits the company may provide the worker).

Info: bit.ly/Contractors637

HOT APPS & WEBSITES

■ Prioritize benefits offerings

What benefits will help you attract and keep employees? A mix of established and flexible ones! Here’s a simple chart to help firms prioritize employee benefits.

Click: bit.ly/Prioritize637

■ Employee views on benefits

Want to know how the pandemic has affected workers’ views on benefits, compensation, salary transparency and more? Check out this new study by Beqom. (Free registration is required.)

Click: bit.ly/BeqomStudy637

■ Employee benefit court cases

Stay abreast of the latest employee benefit court decisions with this article from the American Bar Association.

Click: bit.ly/ABA637

If you have a benefits-related question, email it to Renee Cocchi at: rcocchi@HRMorning.com

LIGHTER SIDE

■ Do people need reminder of workplace etiquette no-nos?

Many workers have been working from home for quite a while. Now that people are returning to the workplace, you may need to give them little reminders of workplace etiquette no-nos.

Here are a few that top the list:

- **Personal space.** People need it. Workplaces require it, especially with a pandemic still going on. So no close talkers!
- **TMI!** No one wants to know if you had a bowel movement today or what your doctor said that lump is on your ...
- **Personal calls.** Co-workers also don’t need to hear your argument with your teenage son, so take it outside.
- **Smelly foods.** Keep them at home.

Info: bit.ly/Etiquette637