

BELL NUNNALLY'S ALANA ACKELS ON SHRM EXPLORES IMPACT OF LOCAL MASK MANDATES ON EMPLOYERS

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Bell Nunnally Partner Alana K. Ackels is quoted in the *SHRM* article “Do State Bans on Local Mask Mandates Apply to the Workplace?” The piece explores the recent issuance of mask mandates by jurisdictions where the CDC has determined there is “substantial” or “high” transmission of COVID-19.

Ackels commented on the following:

On the impact of local mask mandates on private businesses:

“What we are seeing with state mask mandate bans is that they generally restrict the ability of local governments and political subdivisions from implementing mask mandates,” said Alana Ackels, an attorney with Bell Nunnally in Dallas. “Private businesses remain free to implement mask requirements for employees and customers.”

On an individual business’s ability to require masks be worn by employees and/or customers:

Places without mask mandates have put the onus on businesses to implement their own COVID-19 prevention measures. While these employers have the freedom to implement measures suitable for their workforces, she noted, companies should always look to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) as “the gold standards” for determining what prevention measures are reasonable and prudent.

Ackels concludes the article by offering suggestions for employers to consider, as relayed by the piece’s author:

Ackels said employers should continue to monitor the spike in cases and adapt their policies as needed. Many businesses started relaxing COVID-19 prevention measures when the CDC loosened its

recommendations for fully vaccinated people, she noted. In areas with substantial or high transmission rates, employers may need to tighten prevention measures again, she said, which could include limiting in-person meetings and requiring mask wearing when social distancing is not feasible. Additionally, some employers are now considering mandatory vaccine programs.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).

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Alana K. Ackels