

COVID-19: Top 10 focus areas for workplace re-entry

From local government regulations and landlord policies to facilities management and occupancy planning, address these key areas when re-entering the workplace.

While organizations are anxious to get employees back into the workplace, they must keep in mind that determining who will return and when they will return is a complex process. Local government mandates and landlord policies must be considered, as should employees' confidence in building safety. Use this checklist to make sure you are addressing the key areas to focus on for re-entry into the workplace.



Local government regulations

- Confirm guidance from your local government on reopening office buildings to workers.
- Determine whether a new certificate of occupancy is required from your regulatory authorities.



Landlord policies

- Confirm procedures and/or rules for building re-entry and occupation.
- Determine policies regarding building cleanliness and safety.



Business continuity plan (BCP) alignment

- Determine whether your BCP includes a verified list of the essential roles and individuals included in re-entry.
- Confirm that contingency plans/critical response mechanisms are in place in the event that the reopening should fail or the virus reoccurs and forces additional closures. Supply chain



Supply chain

- Identify and confirm supply chains for personal protection equipment and determine advance ordering requirements for long lead-time items.



Human resources (HR)/ legal considerations

- Determine protocols for ensuring employees with high-risk conditions (e.g. lung disease, asthma, heart conditions, immunocompromised, obesity, diabetes, liver disease) do not return to the office.
- Ensure a policy/process exists to report and track infections and compliance with HIPAA rules and to report grievances.



Space/occupancy

- Develop seating/floor plans to meet social distancing guidelines per your local government.
- Establish new workplace etiquette and protocols and communicate them via signage posted throughout the workplace. Be sure to consider ADA implications when making changes.
- Plan how to address impacts on specialty areas (e.g. wellness and mothers rooms, gyms, showers and lockers, mailrooms, breakrooms).
- Determine a policy for employee access to company buildings other than their primary workplace.



Facilities management

- Confirm emergency evacuation procedures in compliance with social distancing requirements, and assign "floor wardens" responsible for managing evacuation.
- Establish elevator social distancing guidelines for multi-story buildings, and calculate and confirm elevator protocols and occupancy levels with your building landlord.
- Create phased and "quick close" procedures to shut down offices in the event the reopening fails or virus reoccurrence forces new closures.



Technology

- Establish enhanced occupancy and employee tracking for building location, space utilization, and potential infection zones.
- Evaluate the room reservation technology and equipment provided at the desk support social distancing and disinfection.



Security

- Determine entry/exit badging protocols for essential employees returning to the building.
- Establish/confirm building shutdown policies in the event the facility needs to be closed again.



Approvals

- Decide who in each region/market/office is responsible for announcing office openings/closures.
- Determine who needs to approve the re-opening plan (e.g. regional crisis management team, market/country leadership, enterprise risk & audit teams, business units, IT, security, legal and HR teams).