

COVID-19: Return-to-Work Checklist

As employees return to work during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, employers face a number of new requirements and challenges. While preparation may look different for each employer, now is a good time to assess business needs and begin planning for what's ahead. Below are some best practices to consider.

Workplace Safety

Establish and enforce social distancing measures

- Post signage at points of entry and common areas to remind employees of the new requirements ([click here to view social distancing policy](#)).
- Stagger shifts and breaks.
- Rotate weeks in the office – consider separating employees into teams to alternate their time in the office.
- Reconfigure workspaces such as alternating every other desk or workstation
- Remote work - allow remote work where possible. Telecommuting has proven to work well during the pandemic for many employers and employees. Consider this a long-term option to promote work/life balance and a cost-saving measure.
- Create a telecommuting policy if there is no existing policy in place ([click here to view sample policy](#)).

Provide personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Review state and local requirements to determine if any PPE, such as face masks/coverings, are required to be provided by employers.
- Order masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer if needed.

Establish cleaning procedures and procuring supplies

- Develop protocol for routine cleaning and disinfection procedures using CDC guidelines.
- Determine frequency of cleaning workstations, common areas, and high traffic areas.
- Order wipes, gloves, sanitizer, and other cleaning products.

Establish new visitor policies

- Develop a protocol for deliveries, vendors, and visitors to ensure adherence to social distancing.

Decide whether to require temperature screenings and/or symptom checks

- Review state and local laws to determine if temperature screenings or health assessments of employees are required.
*Although temperature screenings may not be legally mandated where you are located, they are recommended as per official CDC guidelines and are considered a best practice. Whether or not you wish to implement these checks is currently at the sole discretion of your business.
- Prepare protocol for temperature or general health screenings of employees such as:
 - Provide required state notices or written company notice to employees if temperature screenings will be conducted.
 - Determine the logistics of how temperature screenings will be conducted.
 - Have a protocol in place for reporting results and taking necessary steps based on results.
 - Have all employees sign and return consent form.
 - Check local, state, and federal laws regarding privacy considerations for collecting information.
 - Develop protocol for maintaining confidentiality of employee information (positive tests, experiencing symptoms, doctors' notes).

Restrict business travel

- Start with clearly defining and permitting only essential travel, follow government guidance on restrictions.

Recall Procedures

Timeline

- Determine dates for employees to return to the workplace.

Communicate Return-to-Work plan and timeline to employees

- Ensure employees understand the company's plan to maintain a safe workplace and healthy workforce.

Recall Considerations

- Review local, county, and state government ordinances to determine whether such ordinances will impact your plans.
- Identify who will be brought back and when; consider objective, non-discriminatory criteria and based on business needs.
- Consider remote work where possible.
- Implement staggered schedules.
- Prepare reinstatement memo or letter for employees returning from furlough or lay off

[\(click here to view sample notice of recall\)](#)

Deliberate alternative plans for employees who don't feel it's safe to return or commute to work

- Consider work from home options if essential functions can be performed at home.
- Consider the employee's reason and engage in an interactive process to determine if an ADA reasonable accommodation may be required to offer protection to individuals with disabilities or other covered conditions.

Consider childcare/school Closing issues

- Consider telework for impacted employees.

Communications – It's important to have well-established internal communication procedures.

- Develop a COVID-19 reporting process.
 - Prepare memo to employees confirming how to report if employee has: (1) tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19; or (2) lives with someone who, in the past 14 days, has tested positive for or been diagnosed with COVID-19 or displayed symptoms; or (3) has come into direct contact in the past 14 days with someone who has tested positive or been diagnosed with COVID-19.
[\(click here to view FMLA Leave Expansion and Emergency Paid Sick Leave Policy\)](#)
[\(click here to view Request for Sick Leave form\)](#)
- Establish a safety protocol to be used in response to any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Develop an exposure-response plan that addresses:
 - Isolation and containment – Indicate the period for which employees should be sent home; provide isolation/quarantine requirements.
 - Stay-at-home requirements – Require COVID-19 positive employees to remain home until cleared by a medical provider.
 - Exposure communications and isolation guidelines to affected staff – Identify employees or individuals who worked in close proximity (within six feet) with employee for a prolonged period of time (10 or more minutes)
 - Notify employees of any possible exposure; prepare exposure-response communication templates in advance
 - Disinfect the environment, and notify building management or landlord if applicable
[\(click here to view sample notice of workplace exposure to a communicable disease\)](#)

Compensation – Wage & Hour Considerations

- Provide notice to employees regarding any changes in pay.
- If employees had their payrates changed (or if they were reclassified from exempt to non-exempt), consider when and how to return them to their previous payrates and classifications.
- Be mindful of the state and federal minimum salary thresholds when adjusting exempt employee salaries; be aware of when they fall below the state or federal minimum thresholds.

Policy Changes – Employers may need to create new or amend existing policies

- Adjust paid-leave policies to reflect regulatory requirements and actual business needs.
- Clarify time off request procedures to indicate when time off can be required by the employer, should sick employees need to be sent home.
- Adjust meal and break policies to stagger times and implement new processes to encourage social distancing.
- Update or create telecommuting policies to reflect the type of work that can be done remotely, as well as procedures for requesting telework.

Employee Morale Issues

- Be available for one-on-one meetings and/or check-ins.
- Engage, listen, and adjust as needed.
- Recognition from management and the executive level carries a lot of weight – show personal appreciation for the work of your employees.
- Consider implementing an EAP program for employees.

A National Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a low-cost employee wellness solution available to PrestigePEO clients. EAP is a valuable resource to help your employees cope with a wide range of personal issues such as financial stress, grief, illness, or marital discord. It provides your employees with 24/7 access to EAP professionals specializing in finance, child and elder care, law, and more.

Create a Taskforce

- Assign an individual or group to monitor developments and guidance from federal, state, and local authorities.

Please visit our [COVID-19 Resource Center](#) for useful tools and resources. For more guidance and best practices to help guide your through the process of having your employees return to the workplace, feel free to reach out to your Human Resources Business Partner.