

COVID-19 Safety Checklist for Reopening Your Workplace

May 5, 2020

Step 1: Prepare for employees to return to the workplace.

- **Assess the risk level** of your workplace according to OSHA Guidelines.
 - Lower exposure risk (caution) jobs are those that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 nor frequent close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) the general public. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.
 - Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In areas without ongoing community transmission, workers in this risk group may have frequent contact with travelers who may return from international locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission. In areas where there is ongoing community transmission, workers in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, high-population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings).
- **Obtain appropriate protective equipment** according to the latest guidance on the OSHA and CDC websites as well as to promote feelings of safety in the office.
 - Meet OSHA requirements.
 - *Select protective equipment based upon the hazard to the worker (determined by the risk assessment).*
 - *Ensure protective equipment is properly fitted and periodically refitted as applicable.*
 - *Ensure protective equipment is consistently and properly worn when required.*
 - *Regularly inspect, maintain, and replace protective equipment as necessary.*
 - *Ensure protective equipment is properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of as needed, to avoid contamination of employees or the environment.*
 - Have masks available for employees who are asked to come into work.
 - Obtain hand sanitizer to provide to all employees and/or stations throughout the workplace including at entry/exit points.

- Obtain disposable toilet seat covers for all bathrooms.
- **Prepare the physical workplace** by instituting protective measures before employees return to work.
 - Close or socially distance common areas such as cafeterias, conference rooms, or other collaborative spaces in which employees congregate.
 - Address confined spaces such as elevators, stairwells, and hallways (consider adopting one-way protocols).
 - Install high-efficiency air filters and increase ventilation rates in the workplace to the extent possible.
 - Install physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards, particularly in high-traffic areas such as reception areas or around cubicles of administrative assistants, etc.
 - Install no-touch trash cans.

Step 2: Determine who is coming in and when. **Consider whether employees who are able to work effectively remotely should continue doing so.*

- **Schedule employees** to maximize their ability to maintain social distancing protocols.
 - Divide employees into different groups according to where their work station is located. Schedule groups on a rotating basis to maintain sufficient distance between work stations.
 - *The number of shifts will depend on your volume of employees and the layout of your workplace.*
 - Stagger start times or designate shifts to prevent employees from congregating in entryways or other common areas such as elevators to maximize each employee's ability to maintain a recommended 6-to-10-foot distance from other employees. (Coordinate with building management about common spaces, including elevators, that are not under your business's immediate control.)
 - Assign employees who typically rotate tasks and locations throughout the day to one location per shift. (For example—only one person should staff the reception desk per shift.)
 - Consider whether to offer alternatives to public transportation, such as subsidized parking or rideshares.
- **Screen employees before scheduling** them to return to work.
 - Require employees to answer screening questions and meet the established criteria before scheduling them to return to work. (Model Screening Questionnaire is attached.)

- *Employ a red light/green light system: employees who answer any of the questions affirmatively are prohibited from returning to work.*
- Consider requiring employees to present a negative COVID-19 test before scheduling them to return (understand the inherent limitations of testing).
- **Establish policies for visitors to the office.**

Step 3: Prepare employees for their return to the workplace.

- **Establish and distribute any new policies to employees**—before they return to work—explaining in detail the changes in the office they will need to observe.
 - To the extent employees are able to work from home and are choosing to come in, they should supply their own masks. If they are being asked to come in, the employer should provide them. In open office plans, employees should wear masks at all times. In closed office plans, employees must wear masks in hallways but can remove the masks in their offices (so long as they do not have visitors in their offices).
 - Develop a written policy detailing your response protocol in the event an employee gets COVID-19 or exhibits symptoms.
 - *Determine whether you will close the entire office or specific wings or areas to the extent the risk can be isolated to a specific location.*
 - *Establish a cleaning protocol (in cooperation with building management, as may be applicable).*
 - *Similarly, determine whether you will notify the entire office or specific employees you identify through contact tracing (slight preference for broader notice; it tends to promote trust in the workforce).*
 - Establish a protocol for cleaning the office in between shifts—with a particular focus on bathrooms, copy rooms, or other communal areas that remain open.
 - To the extent employees usually have access to multiple restrooms, limit employees to one restroom according to their location (and limit the occupancy of any restroom as dictated by its size).
 - Close access to your cafeteria, or set up a schedule whereby employees pick up their lunches at designated staggered times. Alternatively, set up a delivery system that will allow employees to order their lunch and receive it at their work stations.
 - Minimize non-essential business travel and expand options to support social distancing (including, but not limited to, preferring video conferencing over in-person meetings even after employees have returned to the office).
 - *Necessary business travel should be limited to its purpose; consider supporting/urging travel by car.*

- **Screen employees onsite** before allowing them to enter the premises.
 - Establish a screening station by the entrance/s at which a trained individual will screen employees by taking temperatures and **going through questions 2–6 on the screening questionnaire** a second time. Consider whether to require an employee to complete the screening questionnaire before arriving at the worksite.
 - *Strongly consider contracting temperature-taking to a third party to reduce the risk of exposure to employees who would otherwise be designated with this task. Provide appropriate protective equipment to the screener.*
 - *Treat these steps as red light / green light as to admission. No need to keep records.*

MODEL SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

**Employees who provide an answer to the following questions OTHER than the REQUIRED ANSWER may NOT return to the workplace UNTIL they are able to answer the questionnaire with all REQUIRED ANSWERS. For daily screenings of employees, only questions 2–6 must be asked.*

1. Have you been self-isolating (and following social distance and face-covering protocol when leaving your residence) for the past 14 days, alone or with others, all of whom also have been self-isolating?
 1. REQUIRED ANSWER: YES.
2. Have you had any symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? Symptoms include any flu-like symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills and/or repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of sense of smell or taste.
 1. REQUIRED ANSWER: NO **OR** YES and the employee has otherwise received clearance from a qualified medical professional to return to work.
3. Have you been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who, in that time period, has exhibited or reported experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?
 1. REQUIRED ANSWER: NO.
4. Have you received a positive test result for COVID-19 and NOT subsequently received a negative test result?
 1. REQUIRED ANSWER: NO **OR** YES and the employee has otherwise received clearance from a qualified medical professional to return to work.

5. Have you been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who, in that time period, received a positive test result for COVID-19?

1. REQUIRED ANSWER: *NO*.

6. Have you traveled on a bus, train, plane, or other forms of public transportation (other than for commuting to work or for approved work purposes) in the past 14 days?

1. REQUIRED ANSWER: *NO*.