



Developing a safe return-to-the-workplace strategy

Best practices for protecting your employees during the pandemic

Operating a business during this time presents unique challenges for employers. In addition to financial concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, determining how to reopen your workplace requires careful consideration about how to keep your employees safe and healthy. Before reopening, it's essential to have a comprehensive plan in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. The following strategies can help.*

Staying Current with CDC Guidelines

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website has [the latest guidelines](#) on how to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. The website also has information to help you decide when it's safe for you and your employees to return to the workplace. Following CDC guidance can be the first step in building a successful plan.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Thoroughly

Before allowing employees to return to the workplace, make sure every area has been deep cleaned and sanitized. Once you and your employees have returned, regular cleanings on all frequently touched surfaces are critical. This includes bathrooms, doorknobs, workstations, keyboards, phones, and handrails. Improving ventilation and air quality are also crucial factors in keeping your workplace safe.

Increasing hygiene measures and promoting distance

Providing your employees with hand sanitizer and face coverings can help prevent germs from spreading. In addition, social distancing practices should be part of your return-to-the-workplace plan to make sure employees remain six feet apart. Strategies for social distancing include:

- Implementing flexible work schedules, including working from home and staggered shifts, meals, and breaks.
- Increasing the space between workstations and installing partitions or shields.

- Limiting travel and in-person meetings.
- Closing common areas and restricting visitors.

Identifying Symptoms

To stay on top of the latest information about COVID-19 symptoms, you can monitor local, state, and federal public health websites (including the CDC's). Strongly encourage employees who are sick or who may have been in contact with someone who is sick to stay home. You can also consider implementing screening measures for people entering your workplace, such as temperature checks and self-reporting of symptoms and exposure.

When conducting health screenings, make sure they're done respectfully and in a way that helps maintain social distancing. Follow guidance from the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) on the confidentiality of personal health information.

If you have an employee who has a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection, try to identify possible exposure of other employees and set a strategy to reduce future transmission based on CDC guidelines.

Keeping employees safe and healthy during the pandemic may continue to present challenges to employers. The key is to stay informed and remain flexible to make changes and adjust accordingly. With careful planning, you can minimize risk and reduce transmission at your workplace.

HealthLink will continue to update and share recommendations as new information is available. For additional information on this topic and to help your employees become better health care consumers, **contact us at 800-624-2356**.

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