

# Return to Office Checklist

## PREPARATIONS FOR REOPENING OFFICE AFTER COVID-19



### □ BE INFORMED

Review guidelines and updates for reopening a business office and monitor regularly. The CDC and OSHA have great resources for workplace guidance and general business information. [Access the links here.](#)

### □ CREATE A SYSTEM FOR RETURNING STAFF TO THE OFFICE

Determine how to return staff safely to the office, such as a phased return in groups over the duration of time so that there are fewer people onsite at any one time or have staggered work shifts or alternating work schedules, such as A and B teams that work every other week or on alternating days.

### □ PREPARE THE OFFICE FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING

Determine the maximum number of people that can safely be onsite at the office at any given time, plus capacities for open areas and rooms. Review the floorplan and determine how to decrease density to provide for six-feet of social distancing and rooms that should be closed.

- Workstations – Reconfigure stations for social distancing or reduce the number of people using them at one time. Also consider adding height panels or side screens for improved barriers.
- Conference and Meeting Rooms – Prepare larger conference rooms for a maximum occupancy of 10 people by removing chairs (if you have a storage area to place them) or placing out-of-use signs on them, and cap the occupancy for smaller rooms.
- Other Gathering Areas and Rooms - Make any needed changes to the lobby, kitchens, work rooms, file areas, storage and supply rooms. Determine maximum occupancy at any one time and other needed changes for usage.

### □ RETHINK HIGH-TOUCH AREAS IN THE OFFICE

Identify items in your office that are high-touch, such as door handles, drawer pulls and equipment, and find any alternatives.

- Implement no-touch controls where possible, such as automatic door openers, water faucets and trash bins.
- Determine how staff can safely use equipment and machines in the office, such as copiers, postage machines, coffee service and water coolers.
- Determine whether any changes need to be made to individual staff equipment, such as switching from phone handsets to headsets.
- Assess the hard-copy files in your office, primarily those located in file cabinets, and consider options for digitizing.

### □ IMPROVE CLEANING AND DISINFECTING OF THE WORKPLACE

Determine options for enhanced cleaning and disinfection of the office, such as intermittent daytime cleaning of high-touch areas and/or nightly disinfection of desktops, other surfaces and high-touch areas. Another consideration is whether to isolate trash in one central area of the office rather than having individual receptacles at work areas.

## ☐ IDENTIFY HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPLIES TO HAVE AVAILABLE

What are the health, wellness and safety supplies needed at the office upon reopening, such as PPE'S? Consider hand sanitizer (preferably touchless), antibacterial wipes, tissues, face masks, disposable gloves and thermometers. Also determine where to locate the items and confirm your supply vendors.

## ☐ REVISE STAFF POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

Create new staff policies, procedures and protocols to meet the demands of the new workplace, such as frequent hand-washing, mask-wearing, staying home if sick, and covering the mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Consider implementing a clean desk policy to ensure desks are uncluttered for better surface cleaning. Also revise HR policies with any changes for paid leave, flexible work schedules, benefits and other items.

## ☐ DEVELOP STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Focus on your staff and consider staff needs during this time as some may be hesitant to return to the office, especially if they have a heightened health issue. Develop a communications system to receive and respond to staff concerns and get input. Also have a staff communications plan in place to convey the new policies and provide education and training about the new work environment and the new protocols, procedures and work schedules.

## ☐ CREATE INFORMATIONAL SIGNAGE TO POST AT THE OFFICE

Create signage for the office that gives direction and reminders on social distancing, safety precautions and the new protocols. Signs may advise on maximum occupancy for meeting rooms or general rules about hand washing.

## ☐ REACTIVATE THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Review your operational needs, business vendors and supply chain to make sure all will be intact and able to meet your needs when your office reopens.

## ☐ DETERMINE HOW TO RECEIVE DELIVERIES AND VISITORS

Determine how to best handle deliveries and visitors to your office suite and set requirements for entry. Note that if your company is a tenant in a building, there may be additional restrictions set by the building.

## ☐ BE AWARE OF THE BUILDING'S NEW POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

If your business is a tenant in an office building, connect with the building manager and inquire about the new health and safety policies. There may be interim rules in place for elevator and stair usage, as well as for the lobby and other shared spaces in the building. There may be new procedures for deliveries and visitors. It's also good to get information about the building's HVAC system so that you have a better understanding of the air quality, including details about air filtration and circulation within your office suite.

## ☐ CREATE AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Create an emergency plan with detailed protocols and procedures in case a staff member begins to show symptoms or if someone becomes infected and the workplace becomes contaminated.

*This article is provided by the Office Relocation Center to help businesses navigate the changing landscape of COVID-19. Subscribe to our [Newsletter here](#) to get future articles and updates.*