

# 15

## Key COVID-19 Safety Considerations for your Return to Work



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Back*



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COVID-19 created a public health emergency that has changed our everyday business operations on a nationwide scale. Some businesses had to temporarily cease operations, while others have had to make radical changes to their workplace in order to maintain safe operations. Now is the time to turn your attention to the next phase of this pandemic and plan for the gradual reopening of businesses and operations.

In an effort to help employers build a safe return to work plan, we have prepared this guide with 15 key considerations as you return to work or reopen your business. PSA is here to help you navigate these and other employment-related issues as we transition into a “new normal” in the workplace.



# 01

## GUIDANCE

**Guidance**—Be mindful of what sources you trust to inform your decisions. Stick with proven sources of information from OSHA and CDC. PSA has created a [Coronavirus resource center](#) which centralizes all the proven resources for you.



# 02

## TRAINING

**Training**—OSHA expects you to train your employees on COVID-19 exposure and risk reduction. Develop a plan on how you will train your managers to ensure they implement the plan effectively and consistently. Continue to encourage teleworking as much as possible.



# 03

## STAGGERED START

**Staggered start-up**—We recommend a staggered approach as much as possible. Consider bringing people back on a rotating basis or for one or two days a week to start. Alternatively, you could have blocks of people come back for a set time, say two weeks, then clean and rotate to the next group. Continue to encourage teleworking as much as possible.



# 04

## EMPLOYEE SCREENING

**Employee screening**—What will be included in your employee screenings? Things to consider include temperature checks, antibody tests, and questionnaires. You must also decide who will administer any testing—this could be an internal or an external expert. Don't forget to develop a strategy for maintaining confidentiality of all employee data collected.



# 05

## PPE

**PPE**—Determine what personal protective equipment (PPE) employees will be required to wear, and whether they will be expected to wear it all day or just when interacting with people. Take stock of your supplies to ensure you have enough for everyone and track your burn rate so you have adequate lead time to purchase more. Be aware of scams; it's worth it to pay a little more (or even a lot more right now) for a trusted name and vendor. Check out one option for PPE [here](#).



## 06

### CLEANING

**Deep and routine cleaning procedures**—In the past, cleaning crews tried to be invisible—no more. Your employees and clients will want to see that you are taking this seriously with cleaning crews present and visible. In your new procedures, tackle issues such as cleaning in between different shifts of people and cleaning high touch areas like doorknobs and counters.



## 07

### SHARED ITEMS

**Shared items**—Most industries, from office settings to construction sites face the issue of shared tools and office equipment. Address how this shared equipment will be cleaned and how often.



## 08

### SOCIAL DISTANCING

**Social distancing**—How will you maintain and enforce social distancing? You may need to reconfigure your space and erect barriers. Don't forget about your restrooms; consider blocking off every other urinal and stall to promote distancing (be sure you don't block off those designed for Americans with Disabilities).



## 09

### LIMITED INTERACTION

**Limited interaction**—Limiting interaction and water cooler crowds when people return will be key. We recommend you still use virtual meetings, phone calls, and emails rather than face-to-face interaction whenever possible.



## 10

### MASS GATHERINGS

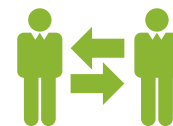
**Mass gatherings**—You will need a plan to eliminate mass gatherings at your location. Consider removing chairs from conference rooms and/or limiting their capacity.



# 11

## CLIENT INTERACTION

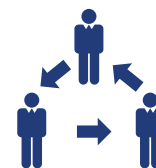
**Client interaction and travel**—Don't forget to establish safety requirements for visiting clients, outlining what PPE you expect your employees to wear on client sites, what types of travel are allowed, etc. We recommend you make it clear to employees that their safety comes first and client relationships are second. Tell them it's OK to leave if a client is being unsafe.



# 12

## VISITORS/TENANTS

**Visitors and tenant controls**—The questions you should be asking yourself are: Will visitors be allowed? What PPE will visitors wear? Do visitors go through the same screening as employees? What plans do your tenants have in place? You could have the perfect return to work plan in place, but a negligent tenant could expose your employees. Now is the time to check with your landlord to ask what they are doing; see if a virtual tenant meeting can be held to share plans.



# 13

## SICK EMPLOYEES

**Dealing with sick employees**—What do you do if you have a positive case or someone showing symptoms? We recommend you develop a set of protocols and a process for recording. Read more about [how to deal with sick employees](#).



# 14

## COMMUNICATION

**Communication**—Over-communicate on this issue. Use multiple avenues (voice calls, texts, mailings, virtual town-hall meetings) to reach employees, not just email. If you think you communicated enough on COVID-19, do more.



# 15

## FLEXIBILITY

**Flexibility**—Be flexible with your plan's evolution. This will not be a one-and-done document. You will have to make changes as data changes, restrictions are lifted or added, and you get feedback from various stakeholders.

