COVID-19
Back to Work Location Strategies and Check List

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Overview of Key Issues

❑ Each organization should develop a Back to Office ("BTO") Task Force to address key issues related to a return to work locations post pandemic restrictions being lifted. BTOs should include a cross representation of professionals from HR, legal, IT, finance, operations, etc.

❑ Their primary focus of each organization's BTO should include:

    ❑ (1) a focus on the safety of staff

    ❑ (2) creating guidelines to address the fluid situation consistently across all locations

    ❑ (3) developing (and modifying) plans to develop protocols to return to usual operating levels

❑ Where possible, BTO Task Forces should seek counsel from medical professionals

Apply Common Sense

❑ Key aspects of the program will rely on basic, common sense in light of the new-normal

❑ Have to be comfortable we have the right people worthy of our trust

❑ Basic common sense:

    ❑ Stay home when one is ill

    ❑ Wear masks in common areas

    ❑ Socially distance

    ❑ Prevent large gatherings in office

    ❑ Limit use of common areas

    ❑ Take advantage of open space that may be available

    ❑ Apply guidelines consistently

    ❑ Over communicate

Scheduling

❑ Ideally, employers have a schedule that gets staff back to the office safely and swiftly and over a condensed period. However, employers need a plan(s) that also provides options for a staged return based on government requirements

❑ Some may consider a staged return where a percentage of their staff are returned over a period of weeks; easing the workforce back in vs. an "all at once: approach

❑ Some solutions may include staff having alternating schedules of working "on site" and "off site" on an alternating basis. For example:

  ❑ Team 1: In office Monday, Wednesday and Friday one week and Tuesday and Thursday the next week

  ❑ Team 2: In office Tuesday and Thursdays one week and Monday, Wednesday and Friday the next week

  ❑ Team 3: Comprised of those in need of special accommodations

Building and Facilities

❑ Here is the primary list of building and facility issues for consideration:

❑ Masks (company provided or personal) should likely be worn at all times when in "common areas" like the lobby, elevator, staircase, etc.

❑ Ensure the use of proper cleaning fluids and materials per CDC guidance and the scheduling of advanced and additional cleaning

❑ Regarding the use of elevators, limit the number of employees allowed per car based on 6-feet social distancing

❑ Verification and safety checks related to HVAC, ventilation systems, etc. per CDC guidance should take place regularly

❑ Provide increased sanitizing stations, wipes, "door opening" wipes, etc.

❑ Perform on-site temperature screening of "visitors and vendors" using hand held devises or other similar devices in private, secure areas

❑ Enhance signage that promotes distancing

❑ Ensure a process is in place for shared communication among all tenants when there is a "test positive" and what the protocols shall be by way of notices, cleaning, etc.

Testing

❑ Temperatures should be measured daily for the foreseeable future. It is suggested that in all possible instances that temperatures be taken "at home" to avoid staff coming into the workplace who may be ill:

    ❑ There are various vendors that have the technology to confidentially capture results daily, including temperatures and responses to other health questions

    ❑ Employees may enter their temperatures into a secure web site and be advised based on their result as to whether to report to work or stay home and speak with a physician. This ensures that someone who is potentially ill does not enter a facility to then be sent home.

    ❑ Employers may implement spot testing on site as a check and balance

    ❑ The cost for most solutions is reasonable

    ❑ In the event this process is not selected or practical based on industry type, employers should contract with a firm that can safely take temperatures

HR Issues

❑ HR issues will be fluid and new challenges will arise as we return to the workplace

❑ Issues all employers need to address include:

    ❑ Documenting business travel policies

    ❑ Evaluating processes on requests for unique accommodations for medical or personal issues related to working remotely

    ❑ Having a policy to address those able to return to the workplace but who refuse to do so

    ❑ Establishment of written procedures for temperature testing, etc.

    ❑ Establishment of written procedures documenting all safety measures taken

    ❑ Review of PTO and policy issues related to the use of such time post pandemic

    ❑ Continue to follow new federal requirements related to approved Leaves related to COVID-19 (which are effective through 12/31/2020)

In Floor Issues

❑ In-floor issues to be considered include:

  ❑ Doors off elevators should remain open to avoid contact (if permissible under fire prevention standards)

  ❑ Staff should wear masks when they are in the corridor, bathroom or open areas

  ❑ Conference rooms should be limited to not more than 6 people (or whatever state or federal guidelines may dictate), provided social distancing at 6 feet can be established (excess chairs will be removed)

  ❑ Kitchen areas should be closed for coffee and microwave use. This includes, for now, limiting the use of refrigerators and coffee making devices. A consideration may be providing bottled water, in the near term. Employees should eat at their desks

  ❑ Only identified staff should operate equipment like copy machines. Machines should be regularly cleaned

  ❑ Signage around social distancing should be prominently displayed

❑ Each employee should receive a "back to work" kit that includes masks and other supplies recommended by CDC

❑ Organizations should determine what excess space may be available in certain offices where workstations are too close. Organizations need to identify any workstations that may be too close for discussion and address working conditions (i.e., use of partitions, etc.)

Other Considerations

❑ Employers will need to also consider other issues, as developments unfold:

   ❑ Having a swift plan to re-remote staff in the event of a flair up or change in state/federal rules

   ❑ Once further advanced, the encouragement of anti-body testing for staff

   ❑ Ensure that c-suite and other leaders regularly communicate with staff / lead by example

Resources

CDC's Visual Road Map of "Re-Opening" Guidelines:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/workplace-decision-tree.pdf?utm_campaign=Memb_US_CVR_Daily_Fri%205.15&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Eloqua

Overall Business and Workplace CDC Guidance:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html

Targeted Business CDC Guidance:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

EEOC Guidelines
https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/pandemic-preparedness-workplace-and-americans-disabilities-act

DOL Pandemic Guidance
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic

Note

This material is being shared in order to assist employers in developing BTPO plans. This material is not intended to provide legal, regulatory, clinical or HR guidance. The information contained herein is in intended to provide an outline of issues for consideration. Employers should consult with applicable professionals in developing and finalizing their respective BTO plans, including evaluating state and federal guidance.