**Back to Business – Checklists and Preparation Guidelines for Returning Staff, Clients, and Prospects**

With many states and cities relaxing restrictions on business operations – many are left asking what their next steps should be. There is a new normal and you should be prepared for it. We have created a checklist and general guidelines you can follow that you can reference when preparing to safely re-open your firm.

The first part is our Covid-19 Quick Start Office Reopening Checklist and it addresses sanitation, health screenings, and office protocols in is divided into separate Sanitation and Workplace Safety Checklists. The second part addresses the human dynamic of preparing your staff, clients, and prospects to return to the office along with specific guidelines and advice.

**Section 1**

**Covid-19 Quick Start Office Re-Opening Checklist**

* Office Hygiene – Sanitation Checklist – Completed
  + General Office and Communal Area Sanitation
  + Desk Sanitation
* Workplace Safety Checklist – Completed

**Section 2  
  
Preparation Guidelines for Returning Staff, Clients, and Prospects**

* Preparing Your Team in Advance
* Reducing Fear Through Open Communication
* Taking a Staged Approach to Re-Opening Your Office
* Using Your COVID-19 Response to Strengthen Your Reputation

**Section 1**

**Office Hygiene – Sanitation Considerations**

Evaluate office surfaces areas and handled materials, particularly in communal and high-congestion areas.

Pay close attention to light and electrical switches, doorknobs/pulls, handrails, bathroom fixtures, counters, desks, tabletops, keyboards, mice, and common area appliances.

If the space has been unoccupied for more than 7 days, it will only need routine cleaning. COVID-19 has not been shown to survive beyond this timeframe.

**General Office and Communal Area Sanitation:**

* Light and electrical switches
* Doorknobs, handles and pulls
* Handrails
* Bathroom fixtures
* Kitchen appliances
  + Microwave
  + Refrigerator
  + Coffee maker
* Kitchen fixtures
  + Cabinet drawer pulls
  + Cabinet drawer handles
  + Sink knobs and handles
* Counter and Tabletop Surfaces
  + Countertops communal/shared spaces
    - Employee Bathrooms
    - Lunch/breakroom
    - Kitchens
    - Breakrooms
  + Countertops general office areas
    - Conference tables
    - Conference chairs
  + Countertops lobby-public spaces
    - Tables
    - Benches
    - Chairs
  + Clean frequently touched wall panels and corners
* Trashcan lids
* Buttons and touchscreens of scanners, printers, fax machines
* Buttons and screens of touch screen and non-touch screen check-in systems such as keyboards and tablets

**Desk Sanitation:**

* Desks
* Chair armrests
* Keyboards
* Mice
* Headsets
* Phone handsets
* Web cameras
* Switches and knobs on desk lamps
* Speaker knobs

**Safe Behavioral and Hygienic Practices:**

* 6 feet social distancing is recommended by the CDC when in a shared space
* Frequent handwashing with soup and water and the use of hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) is recommended
* Use cloth face coverings
* Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
* Staying home when sick
* Routine and frequent cleaning of frequently touched objects and surfaces
* Create long-term practices and procedures that will reduce your staff’s risk
* Maintain standard cleaning routines and practice
* Establish, educate, and promote office hygiene and cleanliness guidelines and standards with your staff

For additional information, please go to:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

**Workplace Safety Checklist**

**Safety measures might include:**

* Implement [Employee Health Screening](https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/wont-hurt-bit-employee-temperature-and-health-screenings-list) procedures. Each state has its own individual requirements, some which are industry targeted. Investigate your state’s (and those you operate in) requirements. Those that do have requirements often require:
  + Employee temperature screening. If an employee’s temperature is above 99.5 - 100.4F + (depending on state) are directed to be sent home
  + Employees exposed to a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case are directed to be sent home
  + Screening of employees for symptoms consistent with COVID-19
  + Screening of employees for respiratory symptoms
* Develop an exposure-response plan that addresses:
  + Isolation, containment, and contact tracking procedures
  + Stay-at-home requirements
  + Exposure requirements to affected staff
* Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff such as:
  + Masks. gloves, face shields, etc
  + Personal hand sanitizer
* Detail cleaning procedures and procuring ongoing cleaning supplies
  + Do not overstock, buy what you need
  + Maintain existing cleaning routines
* Establish physical distancing measures within the workplace:
  + Rotate weeks in the office and working remotely
  + Physically separate office workspaces to increase separation distances
  + Establish one-way traffic patterns on the office floor
* Define client and visitor contact protocols such as:
  + Limiting the number of clients in any area at one time
  + Contactless client intake procedures
  + No handshake greetings remain 3-6 ft. apart
  + Using video or telephone conferencing instead of in-person client meetings

**Section 2**

**Preparation Guidelines for Returning Staff, Clients, and Prospects**

Preparing Your Team in Advance

* Before your office re-opens, meet with individual teams. Tailor your discussion with them as to address their concerns as a team.
* Breakout your teams and speak to each member individually to get a sense of where they are emotionally with the prospect of returning to the office and if there are any health concerns. Some may be eager and ready to return. while others might have reservations.
* Identify and discuss options for staff to work remotely, part-time, or without restriction in the office.

Reducing Fear Through Open and Honest Communication

* You cannot overcommunicate the actions you are taking to help your team, your clients, your prospective clients, and your referral sources feel safe and comfortable returning to the office.
* Remember reducing health risk factors is just the beginning of your response to the crisis. You must instill confidence and demonstrate compassionate leadership.
* Bring back a team unified in spirit in purpose. Your leadership through this crisis will be revealed when they return to the office. Actively seek and responds to their feedback before you dictate to them.

Taking a Staged Approach to Re-Opening Your Office

* Staging will be a natural part of returning to the office. Some staff may be ready to return, while others may not.
* As a leader it will be important for you to practice patience with both groups and individually determine their readiness.

Using Your COVID-19 Response to Strengthen Your Reputation

* Remember that your firm will be scrutinized by not only your response during crisis but also how it manages the draw-down and de-escalation of it.
* Take this time to strengthen your firm’s connection to the community.
* Discover new ways to support your staff and their families.
* By preparing, being open, responsible, and marketing what you’re doing now, you will have a competitive advantage over those that don’t.