

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

Office Hygiene – Sanitation Considerations

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

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 (including microwave, refrigerator, coffee maker, and outer dishwasher handles and buttons)
- Kitchen fixtures (including cabinet drawer handles/pulls and sink knobs and handles)
- Clean frequently touched wall panels and corners
- Counter and Tabletop Surfaces
 - Countertops communal/shared spaces
 - Employee Bathrooms

- Lunch/breakroom
- Kitchens
- Breakrooms
- Countertops general office areas
 - Conference tables and chairs
- Countertops lobby-public spaces (including tables, benches, and chairs)
- Desks and chair armrests
- Peripherals (printers, scanners, webcams, keyboards, and mice)
- Headsets and phone handsets and buttons

Safe Behavioral and Hygienic Practices:

- ✓ 6 feet social distancing is recommended by the CDC when in a shared space
- ✓ The practice of frequent handwashing with soap and water and the use of hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) is recommended
- ✓ Adopting the use and normalization of cloth face coverings in the office
- ✓ Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- ✓ Staying home when sick or when exposed to sick family members
- ✓ Routine and frequent cleaning of 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

- Implement [Employee Health Screening](#) procedures. Investigate your state's (and those you operate in) individual 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) direct them to go 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, including 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
 - ✓ Be prepared but 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
 - Evaluate contactless client intake procedures – social distancing.
 - Substitute video or telephone conferencing in place of in-person client meetings
 - Evaluate need for sanitation screens in reception areas

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 and address their concerns.

- ✓ 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 may 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 and purpose. Your leadership through this crisis is important. Be responsive to feedback you receive.

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 judged by your response to the crisis.
- ✓ 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 are doing now, you will have a competitive advantage over who choose not to.