GBS
A Leavitt Group Company

COVID-19 Employer Resources

GBS Compliance

Returning to Work: A Checklist for a Safe Transition Back to the Workplace

As HR professionals, leaders and employers, we are tasked with preparing for our employees' safe return to the workplace and navigating how best to lower the impact and decrease the spread of COVID-19. Throughout this process, focusing on the physical and emotional well-being of employees and their families is of primary importance. Although we encourage each organization to develop their own policies and procedures to address unique and specific situations, we created this document in advance as a guide to help you address challenges and prepare for the next phase in our fight against the global COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope you will find this information to be a useful road map as our economy is opened at local followed by national levels. As this process begins and then evolves, it is vital for all of us to follow city, county, state and federal guidelines and laws.

To that end, we also included best practices and guidance from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

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Preparation and Communication Prior to Resuming Work

- [ ] Begin talking about the return to work in team meetings prior to the event.
- [ ] Consider a tiered approach to returning employees including a list of those individuals looking to return immediately and those with concerns.
- [ ] Recognize the possible fear involved in returning to work.
- [ ] Consider an employee survey to understand concerns and to check the pulse of feelings experienced by employees.
- [ ] Communicate in writing to all employees a brief summary of the return to work process and contact information for any employee with questions.

Emotional Considerations

- [ ] Recognize and discuss the fears associated with a return to work. Utilize an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as a useful tool for employees.
- [ ] Listen to employees and consider brief feedback surveys or online townhall meetings to understand concerns.

Preparing Your Building and Operations

- [ ] Document your plan and steps in writing.
- [ ] Work with building ownership regarding initial cleaning plans and ongoing focus on cleaning.
- [ ] Take steps to secure additional cleaning supplies and personal disinfectants.
- [ ] Consider a local cleaning company to perform deep cleaning and establish a relationship with this company in the event they are needed in the future following a positive COVID-19 test related to individuals who have been onsite.
- [ ] Communicate to employees regarding new safeguards and cleaning measures in place along with a call for all employees to be responsible for personal cleaning.
- [ ] Confirm with the building owner overall building inspections including maintenance on HVAC and mechanical systems.
- [ ] Assess workspaces to assure daily work can be completed while providing the suggested spacing of 6 feet or more.
- [ ] Adjust waiting areas and common rooms to provide social distancing.

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Maintaining Controlled Access

- [ ] Create protocols for daily safety and health checks.
- [ ] Consider entry points to your operations and whether there will be mandatory check-ins, communications, temperature checks or work from home guidance with employees experiencing symptoms. Daily questions/interviewing for employees arriving to work in high-traffic or densely populated work areas may also prove effective.
- [ ] Consider written steps and protocol regarding entry into the building.
- [ ] Control access and interactions in shipping and receiving areas.
- [ ] Establish visitor guidance and provide signage and written instructions for visitors.

Clarifying Your Social-Distancing Plan

- [ ] Adjust workstations or utilize every other workstation to provide the necessary 6-foot distance between employees.
- [ ] Utilize scheduling and shiftwork to decrease the density of employees at work.

  Allow continued telework opportunities for employees whose job will allow remote work.
- [ ] Consider foot-traffic patterns in areas where traffic is high.
- [ ] Consider employee gathering areas. Use signage and new expectations in these common areas or consider keeping these areas closed during the first phase.
- [ ] Consider a company face-mask policy. Some companies have made the masks mandatory, while many have moved forward with a voluntary plan.

Reducing or Eliminating Touch Points and Increasing Cleaning

- [ ] Where possible consider keeping doors open to eliminate touch points.
- [ ] Close common area drinking fountains temporarily.
- [ ] Create a daily cleaning and clean-desk policy.
- [ ] Offer ideas to employees regarding a food plan. For instance, if technology allows, use software like Zoom for social activities including lunch and social meetings.
- [ ] Obtain volunteers for a CLEAN committee. A group like this can add daily cleaning sessions to your schedule and provided regular, targeted cleaning.
- [ ] Continue to allow/provide opportunity to telework, conference call and Zoom meetings.

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Additional Detailed Measures

Pre-Day One

- [ ] Review CDC, OSHA, WHO, and local guidelines
  - CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019
  - OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
  - WHO: Getting Your Workplace Ready for COVID-19
- [ ] Company Leadership decide on new policies and procedures: flexible work schedules, business travel, high risk employees or those with high risk family members, return to work in phases, etc.
  - HIPAA, FMLA, FFCRA and communication to employees on leave
- [ ] Identify high-touch services
  - Elevator buttons, Copier screens, Break room - handles, Door handles into building, Bathrooms - doors, faucets,
  - Provide sanitizing guidelines and supplies

Personal Responsibility

- [ ] Assign a workplace coordinator responsible for COVID-19 issues and their impact in the workplace - report symptoms, diagnosis, exposure to Corona.
  - Meetings - Zoom or remote meetings continue even if in office.
  - Company policies - wearing masks, supplies provided
  - Personal choices, self-sanitizing - High Risk Individuals - Workers' individual risk factors (e.g., older age; presence of chronic medical conditions, including immunocompromising conditions; pregnancy).

Signage

- [ ] Reminders: frequent hand washing, stay 6 ft. apart, cough or sneeze into arm, tissue, etc, wear mask, don't touch your face
  - CDC: Stop the Spread of Germs Poster
  - CDC: How to Protect Yourself and Others
- [ ] Entrance of buildings: Employees, deliveries, customers

  If you are feeling sick: fever, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath - do not enter this building
  - CDC: Stay Home / Stop Poster

Ongoing Strategy & Feedback

- [ ] Possible town hall virtual meetings
- [ ] Adapt and changes as new information becomes available

The evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic is constantly evolving. The information in this document is based on information known at this time. As you communicate with your employees and look to make policy updates, GBS recommends that you reference real-time data from resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), OHSA, the World Health Organization, and your local health departments for up-to-date information pertaining to your specific region.

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