



BIOAWAY



The New Workspace:

Operating a physical office post COVID-19

The goal of this document is to provide some best practices for returning to a safe office setting in a post COVID-19 environment. According to the World Health Organization, COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The guidelines below have been sourced from OSHA, CDC, WHO and industry experts. They are suggestions and might need custom adaptations based on industry and office setting. We do believe if implemented, these practices will help slow the spread of the virus.

Guidance & Procedures

Prevention Measures

- Create a rotating work schedule to prevent office overcrowding, taking into consider employees with personal health risks, anxiety about commuting or returning to the office & additional concerns
- Designate entry and exit points for the office to minimize high traffic areas
- Discourage carpooling and ridesharing
- Implement temperature readings upon arrival to the workplace
- Require facial coverings and promote other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as necessary
- Change the layout of the office to support social distancing
- Tape markers on the floor with six-foot separation in common areas or points of ingress/egress
- Restrict access to nonessential common areas including break rooms, conference rooms, lobbies, etc.
- Where appropriate, ensure that enclosed office space is used as an employee workspace
- Post health reminders in prominent areas for:
 - Hand Washing
 - Respiratory Etiquette
 - Social Distancing
 - Encouraging employees to stay home if not feeling well
- Promote regular hand washing with soap and provide 60% alcohol or more hand sanitizer around office
- Encourage general physical distancing between employees
- Discourage sharing phones, desks, offices, work tools and equipment when possible
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine disinfecting of surfaces & equipment
- Encourage phone calls and video conferences as appropriate
- Prop open internal doors to avoid touching door handles
- Designate one location for deliveries and other external materials and task only one employee to handle this area
- Consider cross-training employees on certain tasks should an increase of absences occur

Reactive Measures if Employee is Sick

- **Prompt identification of the potentially infectious person is critical**
- Identify the exposure level of the employee:
 - *Primary*: direct contact with a person who has been confirmed with COVID-19 and/or "droplet spread" through coughing or sneezing
 - *Secondary*: being within six feet of someone suspected to have COVID-19
 - *Tertiary*: touching objects that someone suspected of having COVID-19 may have touched
- **If exposure was secondary or tertiary**, the employee should be allowed to return to work and to notify HR if symptoms begin to develop
- **If exposure is primary**, the employee should be required to stay at home to monitor their health for 14 days
- Designate a space to quarantine anyone showing signs until they can be removed safely from workplace

Administrative Policies

- **Encourage sick employees to stay home**
- Do not require a doctor's note for sick time
- Limit non-essential travel
- Have staffing firms on hand to provide temp employees while sick employees stay home
- Promote open communication with employees that have sick family members that need their support
- Ensure cleaning chemicals are (EPA)-approved disinfectants with claims against emerging viral pathogens
- Communicate all back-to-work requirements & schedules prior to returning to the office
- Create a contingency plan should you have to return to a remote environment
- Post hand-washing signs in all restrooms
- Institute an elevator capacity policy
- Establish office cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Provide adequate supplies for office including:
 - Bottled water to avoid shared water-dispensing units
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Facial coverings
 - Gloves

Cleaning & Disinfection

Cleaning

- Wear disposable gloves to protect yourself
- Wash your hands often during the cleaning process and immediately after removing gloves
- Spend daily efforts to clean (with soap and water) high touch surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
- If possible, when cleaning an area used by someone who is sick, open doors to increase airflow for 24 hours before cleaning

Disinfection

- Wear disposable gloves to protect yourself
- Disinfect surfaces after cleaning with soap and water, using EPA-registered household disinfectants or a diluted bleach solution
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water OR 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Keep surface wet for a period of time (refer to product label)
- Alcohol solutions with as least 70% alcohol may also be used
- Consider putting wipeable covers on electronics to simplify disinfection
- Consider a weekly disinfection cleaning service
- Dedicate a lined trash can for garbage resulting from disinfection

Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs

How does it spread?

The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets are relatively heavy, do not travel far and quickly sink to the ground. People can catch COVID-19 if they breathe in these droplets from a person infected with the virus. This is why it is important to stay at least 1 meter (3 feet) away from others. These droplets can land on objects and surfaces around the person such as tables, doorknobs and handrails. People can become infected by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Can I get it from a person with no symptoms?

Many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true in the early stages of the disease. It is possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has just a mild cough and does not feel ill. Some reports have indicated that people with no symptoms can transmit the virus. It is not yet known how often it happens.

Can someone who has had COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person. People are thought to be most contagious when they are symptomatic (the sickest). That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others. More recently the virus has also been detected in asymptomatic persons. How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made using a test-based or non-test-based strategy (i.e. time since illness started and time since recovery) in consultation with state and local public health officials.

Can I grocery shop safely?

When grocery shopping, keep at a least 1 meter distance from others and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose. If possible, sanitize the handles of shopping trolleys or baskets before shopping. Once home, wash your hands thoroughly and also after handling and storing your purchased products.

The New Workplace Checklist

Please utilize this checklist to prepare your workplace, your team, and yourself for returning to a safe & healthy office environment.

All tasks should be completed BEFORE returning to the office:

- Confirm with your local government that it is safe to return to the workplace
- Create and distribute your "back-to-work" policies to employees
- Create an update work schedule, including work-from-home options and flex hours
- Create a contingency plan should you have to return to a remote environment
- Establish office cleaning & disinfection policies
- Print out hand-washing & safety signs for high traffic areas

Ensure you have the following supplies on hand:

- Bottled water
- Hand sanitizer
- Facial coverings
- Gloves

We hope these guidelines help companies implement returning to work standards and protocols, custom designed for each workspace environment so we can safely open our economy and help the community get back to work!

Sources:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

<https://atirestoration.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Go-Back-Safely.pdf>

