Employer Resources –

Sample Reopening & Safe Work Environment Guidelines

With the proposed phased reopening of our economy, we put together some resources to help you develop a plan to create a safe work environment. Find the elements that fit your business, ‘mix & match’ the ideas below, and develop a plan. As the Governor highlighted, a key element to the success of the first phase is to instill confidence in our workforce and the public that it’s safe to go back to work and visit our favorite places.

* **Reopening your Business & Creating a Safe Work Environment – Suggested Checklist #1**

Source: Impact Washington ([www.impactwashington.org](http://www.impactwashington.org))

* + Assess and implement a safe workplace/return to work environment (See next page for ideas on how to create and maintain a safe work environment)
  + Reassess and relax HR guidelines to account for the pandemic, and potential absences due to the pandemic. Consult with HR services, legal counsel, and tax advisors to ensure that you’re meeting state and federal guidelines; and that you’re utilizing tax break allowance.
  + Ensure technology resilience and cybersecurity
  + Obtain financial assistance, recovery loans and grants, if you haven’t already done so. The suggestion is to contact your banker, suppliers, and facility owner to see if you can get a 30 to 90-day payment delay, without penalties.
  + Update your business disaster preparedness
  + Develop your supply chain contingency plan. For a sample “Supply Chain Disruption” document to help you address and plan for your needs, see last page of this document.
  + Retool machinery, methods, workforce approaches
* Look for new opportunities in supplying medical equipment parts and PPE’s.
* Look for new opportunities in other markets (i.e., supply to a different industry or find overseas markets).
* Look for new opportunities to partner within your industry for “workforce sharing” for specialized teams or general workforce needs
* Look for new opportunities for cooperative industry purchasing for supplies and/or joint bidding capacities
* Consider automation solutions or partnering with someone that has excess capacity
* Prepare to onboard and upskill new and returning employees quickly
* Review NIC’s list of online and “hands on” training programs for partnership possibilities
* **Ideas to consider to maintain a safe work environment.**

Source: Tips for Manufacturers, [www.ogletree.com](http://www.ogletree.com); OSHA Guidelines, 10-steps

* + Plan for safety training sessions –safe work environment protocols; and disseminate and post the guidelines
  + Encourage workers to stay home if they’re sick. (This is more likely to happen if employees are confident they won’t lose work and wages under an internal program that relaxes PTO limits for illness related to COVID-19
  + Identify Covid-19 in the workforce quickly
    - Identify high-risk employees, and separate from the workforce immediately: 1) train supervisors to spot Covid-19 signs; 2) conduct daily temperature checks and high-risk activity questionnaires (e.g., travel, contact with high-risk individuals, etc. 4) self-identify (As above, this is also more likely to happen if the employee is confident they won’t lose work and wages.) Check with legal counsel to ensure that you’re not violating individual rights, health protocols and other labor laws.
* Prohibit nonessential visitors to the factory
* Rigorously screen essential visitors and limit their movement in the facility
* Train employees on self-responsibility behaviors (refresh the training regularly), including:
  + respiratory etiquette (cough & sneeze into elbows or cover with scarves and masks)
  + proper handwashing (20 seconds)
  + frequent use of hand sanitizers & wipes (provide as supplies become available)
  + refraining from physical contact (provide suggestions on how to greet each other without physical contact)
  + prohibiting the sharing of utensils, cups, beverages, etc.
  + social distancing (6-feet apart, mark the floor with tape)
* Post reminder signs of these behaviors in many conspicuous locations in the workplace (i.e., bathrooms, breakrooms, locker rooms, etc.)
* Make changes to implement social distancing, such as:
  + educating employees on keeping minimum distances and refraining from physical contact (mark the floor, if needed at 6 -foot intervals)
  + discontinuing the use of large group, “town hall” type meetings; convert to a virtual setting, if possible, or hold in a large space that allows for social distancing
  + replicating meetings multiple times to have smaller groups attend, and physically spacing people out in the meeting rooms
  + eliminating routine shift hand-off meetings that are not critical, or limiting these to just particular persons as critically needed
  + staggering shift start/stop times, break times, and lunchtimes to minimize congregations at the time clocks and in locker rooms and break areas
  + creating new shifts (nights or weekends) to help separate the workforce and give employees scheduling options that may help them manage new family obligations with children home from school
  + zoning the factory and prohibiting employees from wandering into zones where they do not need to be to perform their jobs
  + rearranging furniture in the lobby, break rooms and other gathering places to allow for social distancing guidelines
  + adjusting plant and equipment layout (as much as possible) to allow for social distancing guidelines
  + eliminating common food & drink areas temporarily through the pandemic to minimize the transfer of germs
* Stagger crews so that an outbreak can perhaps be better isolated such that, after cleaning, the factory can run with unaffected crews
  + Example: Monday through Wednesday crews; Thursday through Saturday crews; cleanings to be performed on Sundays
* Identify key personnel without whom the factory cannot operate (e.g.*,* boiler operators, wastewater treatment engineers, lead electricians or maintenance mechanics, etc.)
  + - Creating schedules, procedures, and any other steps to isolate these personnel from each other and the rest of the workforce to try to minimize exposures
* Beef up cross-training, if that can be done with acceptable distancing, to prepare for more absences
* Increase the frequency and depth of sanitizing efforts, and letting employees see them happen to reinforce sanitizing behaviors and engender confidence in the safety of the workplace. Examples might include:
* having break rooms cleaned repeatedly all day (perhaps after each lunch group)
* providing sanitary wipes throughout the facility and training employees on using them constantly to clean high-touch surfaces
  + To view the original article, [please click here](https://ogletree.com/insights/tips-for-manufacturers-on-continuing-production-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/).
  + To view the CDC Corona Fact Sheet about how it spreads and how to protect yourself, [please click here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf).

* **OSHA’s Ten Steps to Reduce Exposure to Coronavirus for a Safe Work Environment**

1. Encourage workers to stay home if sick (and separate sick employees from the rest asap)
2. Encourage respiratory etiquette
3. Provide a place to wash hands or alcohol-based hand rubs (Emphasize hand hygiene)
4. Limit worksite access to only essential workers
5. Establish flexible worksite (e.g. work from home) or flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts), if possible
6. Discourage workers from using other worker’s phone, desk, work tools, and other equipment
7. Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment
8. Use EPA-approved cleaning chemicals for COVID-19
9. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use of all cleaning and disinfectant products
10. Encourage workers to report any safety and health concerns

OSHA also recommends the following:

* Educate employees on the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and the rules above to minimize contracting the disease
* Appoint a single individual or department for Covid-19 questions
* Review safety programs and emergency action plants to ensure the include infectious-disease protocols
* Implement travel guidelines and procedures
  + To see the OSHA10-Step Guidelines poster, [please click here](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3994.pdf).
  + To view the CDC Coronavirus Fact Sheet about how it spreads and how to prevent transmission, [please click here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf).
* **Reopening & Operating Your Business with a Safe Work Environment – Suggested Checklist #2**

Source: A local existing business, information has been modified to be more generic

* + Form a high-level task force consisting of key executives and department heads to establish consistent communications with office personal (in state, out of state, in office workers, subcontractors, vendors, customers, etc.)
  + Assign a lead person to the task force, the HR Director may be a good choice
  + Meet as needed (2X a day at first), decreasing the number of meetings as needs are established.
  + Monitor communications from local, state, federal agencies, including regulatory agencies that apply to your industry or business (OSHA, USDA, NIH, DOT, etc., etc.), as well as regional and national organizations related to your businesses and industry. This will enable you to react immediately to changing guidelines and government mandates that will affect your business/industry.
  + Check with insurance providers (including health insurance providers) and legal counsel to determine coverage for the company and employees, as well as guidance on compliance with the multiple local, state, and federal Covid-19 related mandates and regulations
  + Check with financial institutions regarding relief from business loans, etc.
  + Assign someone from the company or retain a vendor that will handle your public relations communications with employees, vendors, and customers.
  + Utilize social media to communicate with employees to recognize and boost morale. Collect media clips, praise employees for work well done, post to social media accounts.
  + If you hire on a rolling basis … Adapt ‘new hire’ training programs to meet social distancing guidelines –compress orientation and training processes to reduce the number of employees on site.
  + Additional key issues to take care of your employees
* Have department heads identify individuals with childcare issues due to mandatory school closings.  Accommodations should be made to permit individuals with a childcare hardship to continue to temporarily work from home.
* Have department heads identify individuals that are considered “high risk” to contract the virus.  Accommodations should be made to permit “high risk” individuals to continue to temporarily work from home.
* If still needed, ensure your IT department or subcontractor can secure enough equipment and can install the appropriate software (including cybersecurity), as well as develop step-by-step instructions that enable employees to effectively and efficiently work from home. In some instances, office desktops were brought home and installed in “home offices.”
* If not already done, accelerate the installation of new phone systems, server systems and any other technology to provide seamless communications between off-site employees, on-site employees, vendors, and customers.
* Social distancing practices were established for on-site employees. Examples of actions to take:

1. Office space and orientation rooms were appropriately cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis.
2. As supplies became available, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes and masks were provided to all employees.
3. Sanitize equipment and machinery after each shift change.

* Continue to monitor the processes, and make changes as needed. Changes are happening quickly, ensure that you monitor the processes regularly.
* **Other Resources to help you develop guidelines for a safe work environment**
* OSHA Publications: [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf). A brief on the contents of the 35-page guide, can be found [here](https://ohsonline.com/Articles/2020/03/16/OSHA-Releases-Guidance-on-Preparing-Workplaces-for-COVID19.aspx?Page=1).
* Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):  [Key OSHA standards for COVID-19](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/standards.html)
* US Chamber of Commerce Foundation:  [Workplace Tips for Employees](https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/coronavirus_workplace_tips_for_employees.pdf)
* [Emergency Prevention Measures for Physical (Social) Distancing in Food Manufacturing Facilities as Related to COVID-19 *(updated March 26, 2020: Source:  Food Northwest)*](https://www.foodnorthwest.org/food-northwest-social-distancing-in-food-mfg)
* CDC Safety Video to Stop the Spread of Coronavirus in Construction Zones can be found [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZn6EBLKoWY&feature=youtu.be) and another [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZn6EBLKoWY&feature=youtu.be).
* U. S. Department of Labor[- COVID-19 and The American Workplace](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic). The Site contains:
* [Temporary Rule:](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/ffcra) Paid Leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act
* Fact Sheets: Families First Coronavirus Response Act – Employee: [English](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/Pandemic/FFCRA-Employee_Paid_Leave_Rights.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/Pandemic/FFCRA-Employee_Paid_Leave_Rights_SPANISH.pdf)
* Fact Sheets: Families First Coronavirus Response Act – Employer: [English](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/Pandemic/FFCRA-Employer_Paid_Leave_Requirements.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/Pandemic/FFCRA-Employee_Paid_Leave_Requirements_SPANISH.pdf)
* Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act): Posters: [English](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/posters/FFCRA_Poster_WH1422_Non-Federal.pdf) and [Spanish](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/WHD/Pandemic/1422-spanish.pdf)