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# EMPLOYCO USA

*The Power to Compete*

**NEWSLETTER**

June 04, 2020

## REOPENING - WHICH EMPLOYEES SHOULD RETURN?

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The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has interrupted many businesses across the country. While it's unclear how long COVID-19 will continue to affect organizations, many employers are looking to return employees back to work.

Echoing the sentiments of public health officials, a return to normalcy won't be like flipping a switch, but rather a gradual effort. In preparation for reopening your business and asking employees to come back to work, it's imperative that your company thoughtfully constructs a return to work plan for its employees to keep everyone healthy and safe following the COVID-19 pandemic.

One significant aspect of the plan is reviewing the list of employees who will return to on-site work and the employees who will continue working from home.

### **Start with a survey:**

This is a great start to your workforce planning. Although you may have a good idea of which employees are eager and able to return, gather definitive employee responses through the survey. Let employees know that the survey is not anonymous because you are looking to tailor a plan, as much as possible, to their individual needs.

In addition to asking employees for their general comfort level and safety preferences, you can ask employees to select from one of the following statements:

- I'm ready, able and would prefer to return to work at the office, and I'm ok working either full-time onsite or a mix of onsite and working from home.
- I'm able to return to the office but I prefer to continue (temporarily) working from home full-time because I prefer working remotely regardless of the COVID-19 crisis.
- I'm somewhat comfortable returning to the office but prefer to continue (temporarily) working from home full-time because I'm concerned about contracting COVID-19 even though I don't have underlying health conditions that puts me in a high-risk category.
- I'm uncomfortable returning to the office and prefer to continue (temporarily) working from home full-time because I have an underlying health condition that puts me in a high-risk category. I understand that my company will not ask me for the diagnosis of my underlying health condition.
- I'm not able to return to the office because either I, or someone in my household, have COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- I'm not able to return to the office because I need to care for someone who is sick at home.
- I'm not able to return to the office because I need to care for a child at home due to a school/camp/day care closure.

- I don't have a preference of returning to the office or continuing to work from home.

### Recommendations:

- **Incorporate the survey responses** - Using the list of employees who are eager and able to return, evaluate potential floor plan changes and staggered schedules allowing for social distancing protocols and best practices.
- **Consider a slow open** - A phased approach can help employees reacclimate to the work environment and readjust, having to now deal with regular commutes and professional appearance expectations.
- **Review flexible schedule options** - The pandemic inadvertently turned thousands of employees into full-time caregivers in just a few short weeks, with nursing homes, day cares, schools, and summer camps closing down. Many of these employees will retain these caregiving duties even when businesses reopen.
- **Don't force employees to return (yet)** - Especially if the reason for your decision is that you don't trust employees to be as productive. Many people have been equally, if not more, productive working from home.

### Conclusion:

It's important to remain flexible and adaptive throughout your reopening process. Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, rules and regulations are constantly changing. You should be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations. Depending on how the pandemic progresses, you may need to make changes to your return to work action plan, suspend operations again or add additional safety measures.

While resuming operations following the COVID-19 pandemic may seem like a daunting task, you don't have to go it alone. To help with this process, [contact us](#) for support to ensure your business reopens smoothly.

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### **RECORDED WEBINAR**

In case you missed yesterday's webinar, click the link below to view our recording on "Reopening the Workplace" where we discuss the latest tips and best practices for getting your location and employees ready to return to work.

[WEBINAR: Reopening the Workplace \(After the Coronavirus Shutdown\)](#)

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For the latest material regarding COVID-19 and how it relates to the workplace, check out: [www.employco.com/coronavirus](http://www.employco.com/coronavirus)

Please [contact us](#) if you have any questions.



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