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WorkplaceReadiness

A Checklist for Returning to the Office After COVID-19

As businesses prepare to return to daily operations in the workplace, it's no longer business as usual. The following is a checklist of activities to consider when creating your safety plan for returning to the workplace post COVID-19. Consider these suggestions to ensure a safe and productive environment for all your employees.

A Checklist of Actions to Consider in Your Return to the Workplace Safety Plan

Prepare Your Employees

- ☐ Ensure alignment among leadership from the top of the organization for return-to-work goals and objectives
- ☐ Form a committee of staff across all levels of the organization and develop a detailed return to the workplace plan including what (and how and when) is to be communicated to customers through all three phases of return per local order
- ☐ Ease the anxiety of returning to the workplace through careful planning and thoughtful and regular communications
- ☐ Engage EAP or other health professionals, if necessary, and focus on mental health, emotional support and education from employees
- ☐ Clearly communicate HR policies regarding illness, FMLA, short-term disability, etc. and assure staff that there is no penalty for staying home if exhibiting symptoms
- ☐ Develop a testing protocol that works best for your company, such as temperature scanning or symptom monitoring

Prep Your Physical Space

- ☐ Ensure all necessary inspections, remediations (such as a deep cleaning protocol), accommodations or repairs to the physical space are completed before reopening
- ☐ Reduce access to the physical space to employees and essential maintenance/repair vendors only
- ☐ Develop building disinfection and cleaning guidelines and practices and communicate these to your staff for their peace of mind
- ☐ Set up entry and exit protocols for employees including symptom self-checks and access to masks and gloves
- ☐ Set up physical barriers or protocols that provide safety for employees and good optics for those who may visit, especially if customer traffic is part of your daily operations
- ☐ Control the entry points for and consider contactless deliveries of mail, materials and packages
- ☐ Communicate expected traffic flow and staff engagement procedures through signage and temporary wall or floor markings

Reinforce Physical Distancing

- ☐ Control the density of your workforce by alternating work days or weeks combined with working from home
- ☐ Stagger employee return to the workplace and provide ongoing flexibility to work from home if it aligns with the employee's job duties
- ☐ Provide visual support to promote appropriate distancing throughout the workplace ("x" marks the spot for how far away to stand from a fellow employee in a community area, for example)
- ☐ Monitor space usage throughout the day through regular rounds by members of your COVID action team
- ☐ Enforce the 6-foot rule by adjusting employee seating or station/line assignments and prohibiting face-to-face meetings unless the distance rule can be applied
- ☐ Set up hand cleaning stations throughout the building, especially if restrooms are not easily accessible to all employees

Encourage and Empower Cleanliness

- ☐ Enable self-directed hygiene through distributed workstation kits including hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes, and single-use gloves and masks
- ☐ Institute a clean desk/workstation policy that includes removal of clutter or personal items
- ☐ Require that employees disinfect their work areas at the start and end of their workdays
- ☐ For employees exhibiting symptoms, designate an isolation room/protocol or immediately send them home
- ☐ Remove community food and beverages (including water coolers) or consider single-serve items
- ☐ Remove high-touch shared tools such as whiteboard markers, remote controls, etc.

Communicate Clearly and Often

- ☐ Stop the spread of misinformation through regular, open and honest two-way communication
- ☐ Communicate through multiple mediums to ensure messages reach across demographics, including video, email, text push messages, signage and more
- ☐ Survey employees regularly about their comfort, and to keep tabs on their sense of safety and anxieties
- ☐ While conveying safety-related messages also share positive messaging to address employee stress and mental health
- ☐ Set up multiple ways for employees to express concerns anonymously or potentially report suspected employees exhibiting symptoms through mediums such as internal web portals, email (virtual suggestion box), hotlines or, if necessary, a physical suggestion box with single use pens
- ☐ Regularly express empathy to your employees and express appreciation for their service
- ☐ Create and communicate rapid action plans for the possibility of positive COVID exposure in the workplace

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