

HR Workplace Checklist for Safe Business Reopening During COVID-19

New policies, office culture habits,
and rules to keep employees and
customers safe amid COVID-19



How to Throttle Business Back after COVID-19

Experts say one of the most important parts of our economic recovery is consumer confidence.

As a business owner, or Human Resources (HR) leader, this means you'll need to take careful precaution to adapt your work environment into a safe environment for both staff and customers.

WORKERS may be nervous coming back to the office and feel unprepared to know what to expect. You may discover certain critical staff have high risk conditions keeping them from wanting to interact in their roles in the same ways they had before. Employees may ask if they can be tested or have colleagues be tested for the virus, and you'll need to know how to handle these situations.

CUSTOMERS, too, may pose unanticipated challenges. They may fear coming into your office or storefront. They may be accustomed to virtual meetings. Or perhaps your business lacks sufficient infrastructure to manage more digital consumer bases.

While no one can guess the shape or magnitude of the changes yet to come, we know HR leaders can make preparations today to be ready for when restrictions are lifted.

// “Back to work” during high transmission creates formidable litigation, insurance and employee management challenges for public and private institutions. //

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What's the role of HR?

Fundamentally, the roles of HR coming out of COVID-19 lockdowns are threefold. You'll need to:

1

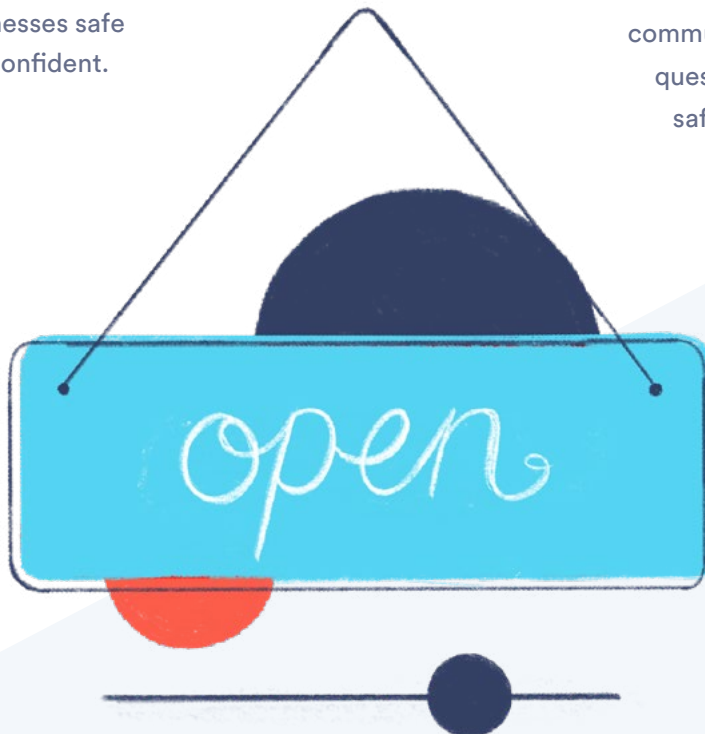
Ready workplaces ahead of time to keep businesses safe and consumers confident.

2

Clearly document and communicate new policies.

3

Create internal and external communications that address questions, concerns, and safety considerations.



The following checklist is the first in a multi-part series, ***The Coronavirus Comeback Kit***, which was being created to help HR staff and business leaders prepare for a successful transition back to an open economy.

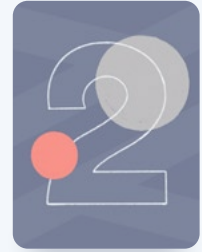
To request a free copy of the complete document please email hello@zenefits.com

The following checklist should be considered a guideline or as suggestions only. Please use it in a thoughtful manner, feeling free to update, customize, redact, or alter the suggestions to create the most meaningful checklists for your place of work.

Copying and pasting these lists is permitted and will not be considered plagiarism.



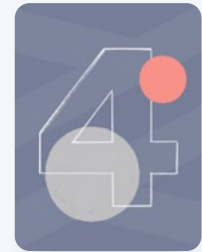
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HR CHECKLISTS FOR REOPENING



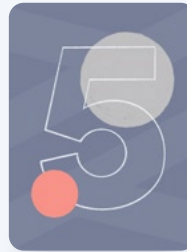
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REOPENING EMAIL TEMPLATES TO STAFF AND CUSTOMERS



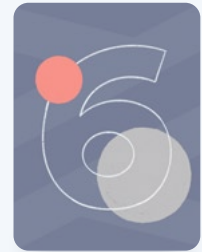
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RULES RE: COVID-19 STAFF TESTING



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HIRING AND ONBOARDING AMID COVID-19



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SIGNAGE TEMPLATES (.INDD FILES)



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SOCIALLY-DISTANCED REOPENING LAUNCH PARTY IDEAS



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DOCUMENTING AND COMMUNICATING NEW POLICIES

Workspace Preparation Checklist for Your COVID Comeback

Make a Set of “No Personal Contact” Rules

Limit handshaking, closed meeting spaces, hugging, or any other physical contact that is not necessary for the job or role.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Where is contact made between employees in a normal situation?
- Which contact is critical?
- Is there personal protection equipment (PPE) that my staff could use to reduce the transmission of infection for essential contact?
- Where can I procure PPE?
- How and where can I post new no-contact rules to ensure my staff has read and understood our updated policy?

Encourage “No Item Sharing” When Possible

This includes things like pens, staplers, notebooks, dry erase markers, desk space, file folders, computers, and anything else that can be assigned to individual workers and not shared. Not all businesses will be able to afford a zero-tolerance policy of shared work tools, but where, within reason, a limiting of exposure to shared objects, caution should be made.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are the essential tools of my business?
And who uses them?
- Are there any high-risk staff whose job may increase their risk of infection?
- Are there any PPEs that can help protect my workers?
- What are the items my business can afford to supply all workers with?
- How and where can I post new “no item sharing” rules to ensure my staff has read and understood our updated policy?

Reorganize Your Floor Plan

What can you do to your workspace that will maximize 6-foot distance between workers, customers, and visitors? Can you stagger workspaces? Adjust desks to point towards walls or office partitions?



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are the essential needs for space for the business?
- Which areas are underutilized today?
- What are we using _____ space for?
Could it be reconfigured?

Get Rid of Common “Gathering” Areas

In accordance with the step above, reconfigure your water cooler hangout spots, too. Can you reallocate communal gathering places for open-air conferences space or more roomy desk arrangements? Before COVID-19 workers liked to share kitchenettes, breakrooms, and staff lounges, but we might not be able to afford such on-the-job luxury spaces. Where can you minimize hang-out spaces and maximize 6-foot distances?



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Do you have common gathering areas?
- How do your employees naturally hang out? And where?
- While not eliminating employee camaraderie, what’s the best approach to minimize staff exposure to one another?

Close Breakroom Hangouts

Workers need breaks both legally and mentally. How will you handle them? Previously restaurant and retail breakrooms could be found with several staffers relaxing on worn out couches, quickly eating snacks or cracking jokes before returning to the floor. Now, these breaks need to be monitored.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Is your staff 6-feet apart?
- Do your breakrooms have enough room to accommodate the amount of workers who would be taking a break at once?
- What about smoke breaks and lunch breaks?
- Are there signs posted to wash hands before re-entering the workflow after breaks, just as there were in restrooms?

Create Prominent Hand Sanitizing Stations, Complete with Cleaning Supplies

“Hand-sani” might be your newest line item on your profit and loss statement (P&L). Businesses will need to invest in safety equipment for both workers and patrons to keep consumer confidence. If your shop feels “risky,” shoppers might not return. So make a point to buy 60% or more alcohol per volume hand sanitizers and make them freely available across your business or office space.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Are you able to afford hand-sanitizer stations?
- Where would be the best place(s) to put hand-sanitizer stations?
- What signage would you need to create?
- Are there hand-sanitizer dispensers available for guests, visitors, mailmen, clients, friends, neighbors, customers?

Post Communal Equipment Cleaning Rules

If your office has gyms equipment, common-use equipment like copy machines, metal machinery, industry-specific tools, consider posting clear directions about how to clean the equipment between uses to keep multi-users safe.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are the most common communal equipment uses in your line of work?
- Are these shared?
- What are the equipment cleaning considerations you deem reasonably required to keep clean of COVID-19 or other germs?
- Are there any training sessions needed to ensure the safety of staff while increasing their cleaning responsibilities?
- How much time would you expect this to take?
- Does that impact the expectations of each individual contributor's workloads?

Create Appropriate Face Mask Rules

States and companies are able to make individual requirements regarding face mask requirements. For instance, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine is requiring face coverings for employees and clients/customers at all times. And JetBlue, the airline company, was the first to require both staff and passengers to wear face masks at all times during travel. While heeding federal and local regulations, create face mask rules that you deem are the most appropriate for you line of business. Then, update your employee handbook with your new policies, and make sure employees are clear with your expectations of both them and the customers you serve.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How close are my employees to customers?
- How much do you think wearing face masks would increase the confidence of your clients or custom body?
- What is your budget for PPE?
- Is it reasonable to expect face mask policies?
For how long?
- What all would go in your policy, and what are the consequences for employees who break conduct?

Limit the Number of People in a Closed Room

If you must have a “closed-room” discussion after opening your office, assess the options to either (1) host the discussion in a large enough room to give each attendee a 6-foot space between one another, or (2) host the meeting virtually, wherein each participant may in fact be under the same roof, but the meeting still takes place via a web conferencing tool online, to minimize direct exposure. As a general rule, post the number of people each room can accommodate, and make sure to update room booking software accordingly. For instance, if your conference rooms were bookable for 10 people before coronavirus, and now it is deemed that the space can actually only host 3-4 people, update the preferences so that employees aren’t making inadvertent errors in booking meetings.



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- How many conference rooms do you have / do you need?
- Are there any ways to conduct business virtually?
- How many people can safely fit in your conference rooms now?
- Are there adequate cleaning supplies and ventilation systems to prevent the transmission of COVID in these spaces?
- Do you feel comfortable with your workers using these spaces for group discussions?

Break the 9-5




The 9am to 5pm workday might be under societal scrutiny as group dynamics wane in favor for distanced interactions between people. And, it's not just the 9-5ers who need to consider this, but how can any business adjust its hours of operation to manage public health?



QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are other ways your business could reduce the likelihood of infection?
- Could you stagger workdays into shifts where employees come at non 9-5 hours based on team or function?
- What are the parts of your business's products or services that can remain remote? As an example, consultancies often set up in-person "discovery meetings" with new clients. Could this remain virtual moving forward?
- Would employees consider working weekends for two days off during the weekday?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

-  [The Centers for Disease Control's Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance](#)
-  [Environmental Protection Agency's List of Approved Disinfectants for Use for COVID-19](#)
-  [Workest's How To Make Your Own Hand Sanitizer](#)

How Does Zenefits Help?

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- The CARES Act
- COVID-19 Special Benefits Enrollment Period
- Paycheck Protection Program
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