



## Safely managing your firm during COVID-19

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As we navigate through the issues that COVID-19 has presented, you may be wondering how to safely and effectively keep your office up and running. With the rapidly changing rules and recommendations for things like personal protective equipment, employee temperature checks and contact tracing, it's hard to keep up with the latest.

Unfortunately, there's not a one-size-fits-all answer and may rely somewhat on trial and error. There are however some topics you should think about and policies to consider to keep your employees safe, clients happy and firm successful.

This checklist will help you get started as you put together your plan for navigating safely through the pandemic.

### Quick tips

- Show concern for your employees. Give them an opportunity to share their concerns and ask questions.
- Show concern for your clients. Create policies that balance their professional needs with concerns for their health.
- Communicate and educate frequently.
- If you're a larger firm, brainstorm with each department on what they need to feel safe.
- Document what you will do, when you will do it and who will be responsible.
- Ensure someone is monitoring national, state and local regulations on an ongoing basis.

### Your employees

- ✓ Is coming into the office mandatory? If so, how will you address employees who don't feel safe returning or those who are high risk?
- ✓ Will you bring back all employees at the same time, or stagger them (i.e. creating A/B employee groups)?
- ✓ How will you respond if an employee who's been in the office is diagnosed with COVID-19? Will you communicate the possible exposure to other employees? If so, how will it be communicated and what is the privacy risk?
- ✓ If an employee does not have available sick time, how do you make sure they do not come to work if they are sick?
- ✓ If employees travel (including to other internal offices, client offices, other states, other countries, etc.), what protocols will ensure their safety?
- ✓ How will you respond if an employee needs to care for an infected family member?
- ✓ What measures are in place for those considered medically vulnerable?
- ✓ Will you complete health screenings before people are allowed to enter the building or will each employee be responsible for that themselves? Are there legal or privacy issues with this in your state?
- ✓ Will you encourage people to drive, cycle or walk vs. taking public transportation?

## Your operations and facilities

- ✓ How will you decide if you need to reclose the office?
- ✓ If you reclose, what needs to happen to reopen again?
- ✓ How will you keep employees and clients informed of changes?
- ✓ How will you disinfect the office?
- ✓ How will you keep high-touch surfaces clean, such as coffee stations, water fountains, bathroom doors and elevator buttons?
- ✓ Will you close or alter community spaces such as elevators and meeting rooms?
- ✓ How will you allow for social distancing in the office (i.e. remove chair from some cubes, setup plexiglass between workspaces)?
- ✓ How will you address IT and security concerns while employees are working from home?

## Your clients

- ✓ Will you allow clients to come into your office? If so, will they have to go through the same protocols as employees?
- ✓ Will you notify clients if an employee who they met with is diagnosed?

*\*This list is based on the Journal of Accountancy article "[35 questions for coronavirus planning](#)" by Neil Amato*

## Additional resources to consider

- Toolkit: [Businesses and Workplaces Health Considerations and Tools](#) (CDC)
- Guide: [Employer Information for Office Buildings](#) (CDC)
- Toolkit (PDF): [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) (OSHA)
- Toolkit (PDF): [COVID-19 Response Planning Preparedness Considerations | Comprehensive Decision-Making Tool Kit](#) (AON)
- Toolkit (PDF): [Reopening the Profession](#) (Maryland Association of CPAs)
- Guide: [Question & Answer Employer Guide: Return to Work in the Time of COVID-19](#) (Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP)
- Toolkit (PDF): [COVID-19 Response—Return-to-Work Considerations for Employers](#) (Sullivan & Cromwell LLP)
- Article: [A Return to Work in the New Normal](#) (BDO)
- Article: [Returning to the Workplace: Post-Pandemic Considerations](#) (Witham)
- Article: [Preparing For Re-Entry: Key Considerations For Returning Employees To The Workplace Amid The COVID-19 Crisis](#) (JD Supra, LLC)

