

COVID-19 COVERAGE

RETURN TO WORK CONSIDERATIONS
FOR EMPLOYERS

COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for employers, and there is no playbook or precedent for how to effectively manage when employees return to work. Because it will not be business as usual, below are considerations along with a list of resources to bring employees back to work safely.

Considerations

- Consider asking employees to complete a **pre-entry survey**. The survey will provide an understanding of employee's thoughts and concerns regarding returning to work and provide guidance as your company establishes business processes.
- Prior to returning to work, train staff on the new procedures they will see once they return to work. Create a **clear communication plan** that will allow your staff to understand your business processes.
- Determine how to handle employees who are **unable or unwilling** to return to work.
- If your business chooses to do **symptom and temperature checks**, consider whether you will do it directly, through a third party or by self-reporting. If the check will be done by representatives from your business, designate one individual to perform the checks and provide appropriate PPE. Be sure to perform the checks in a private area, and information must be kept in the employee's confidential medical file. If your business is not performing checks, have employees self-certify prior to coming back to the office.



Return to work during COVID-19 unfortunately does not mean a return to normal business operations.

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- Require employees to **wash their hands** or use hand sanitizer as they get to work.
- Establish **physical distancing measures** within the workplace:
 - Stagger shifts and lunch/rest breaks
 - Consider rotating weeks in the office and working remotely
 - Move workstations, if needed, to increase the distance between desks
 - Implement one-way traffic patterns within the workplace
 - Consider limiting meeting room capacity or utilize telephone or video conferencing
- If an employee **tests positive for COVID-19**, inform other employees of the exposure. This should not be communicated company wide, but to employees working in the same area or who had contact with the positive employee. Do not reveal the name of the sick employee. Follow the [CDC guidelines on contact tracing](#). In addition, be familiar with OSHA's current guidelines for recordable COVID-19 cases.
- Per current CDC guidelines, employees who test positive for COVID-19 may **return to work** when:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as a resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); and
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- **Review your company's policies** to make sure they reflect the new normal. Policies to review may include sick leave, attendance, travel policies, information technology, and telework. Managers should also be trained on the policies and held accountable to enforce them.

For further guidance on your COVID-19 or HR-related questions, contact HRConnect at support@hrconnectiowa.com or by calling our office at 319-234-8888.