

Return to Work Toolkit

Introduction

Many counties in Washington State are moving closer, or have already moved, to Phase 2 of the Governor’s Safe Start plan to return to the workplace after COVID-19 disruptions. This CH& Return to Work Toolkit is designed to help employers navigate the changing expectations and regulations related to welcoming employees back to the workplace. It pays special attention to the requirements for construction jobsites and office locations.

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Disclaimer

This Return to Work Toolkit represents the knowledge and recommendations of the authors based on the best information known as of the date of publication (June 2020). Information about implementation of the various re-entry Phases is consistently changing and may vary based on county and city policies. Businesses are strongly advised to stay independently abreast of the re-entry rules, policies, and procedures applicable to your industry and business location. The attorneys at Cairncross & Hempelmann remain ready to help you navigate this landscape. We encourage you to reach out with any questions.

About Cairncross & Hempelmann

Cairncross & Hempelmann is a full-service law firm with office in Seattle's historic Pioneer Square District. Founded in 1987, CH& advises companies and individuals in business, real estate, land use, and litigation. Our attorneys stand ready to help clients navigate through the workplace changes created by the COVID-19 pandemic and related announcements by government and health officials.

III. Communicate with Employees and Crews

Employees are likely to be apprehensive about returning to work. You can help reduce some of their anxiety by offering a clear, caring message about the steps taken to ensure employee safety. Reinforce this message to employees through regular communication and posted notices in your offices and jobsites.

A. Prepare a Company-Wide Memorandum Regarding Safety Measures

We recommend sending a company-wide memorandum that outlines the plan and steps for reopening your workspaces. In general, a clear, sympathetic message from management should:

1. Acknowledge that employees may be feeling apprehensive about returning to work amidst the uncertainty;
2. Assure employees that it is the company's intention to be smart about its reopening processes and ensuring worker safety;
3. Outline in detail the protocols in place to ensure social distancing, routine sanitation, and symptom monitoring;
4. Affirm that CDC/OSHA guidelines are followed in your approach to reopening the workplace;
5. Offer options to high-risk employees (*e.g.*, allow certain employees the option to continue working from home, or use available PTO or other paid leave benefits if not ready to return to work); and
6. Invite employees to express concerns or ask questions about the process.

B. Post Notices and Distribute Communications to Employees

As you prepare the workplace to reopen, also make sure that all mandatory and recommended posters are posted in appropriate break areas. If some employees are continuing to work remotely, provide them with a copy of the notice via email.

Posters for Common Areas

The following Posters are saved as PDFs for your use in **Materials**.

- "Employee Rights Poster for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)". For additional language posters, visit: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/posters> (**Mandatory**)
- "Handwashing Guide" (**Recommended**)
- "Don't Spread Germs at Work" (**Recommended**)
- "Mask Wearing Instructions" (**Recommended**)
- "Slow the Spread of Germs" (**Recommended**)

Forms to Distribute to Employees

Distribute guidance to your employees and advise them as to best practices and expectations for when they return to work. The following forms are saved as PDFs for your use in **Materials**.

- Employee Behavioral Expectations for the Office – Worksheet
- Daily Symptom Self-Check
- Cleaning your Workstation
- What to Do if You Are Sick – CDC Guidance

Provide Notice to Clients and Visitors to the Office

Be prepared to provide a notice to visitors that explains the company's social distancing and hygiene requirements. Additionally, in King County, the Phase 1.5 Plan *requires* that visitors and clients to an indoor professional office **must limit their visit to 30 minutes or less**. A sample notice of the "Visitor Notice" is provided at **Exhibit B** as well.

Posting Requirements for Construction Jobsites

Phase 2 comes with lessened requirements from Phase 1 as to what must be posted on the jobsite. Contractors are only required to post the following on jobsites:

- Hygienic practices
- Name and contact information for COVID-19 Supervisor

C. Distribute Forms for Cleaning Audits and Symptoms Reporting to Taskforce Leaders

Next, make sure that you have distributed forms for your Taskforce Leaders and managers to use to ensure a streamlined, consistent process for cleaning and reporting across the company. The following forms are saved as PDFs for your use in **Materials**.

- Data Collection Form – Symptomatic Individuals in the Workplace
- Manager Decision-Tree for Sick or Potentially Exposed Employees
- Sanitation Schedule Checklist