

SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE TIME OF HYBRID WORK

Are you doing all you can to keep your employees safe in a hybrid work environment?

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way organizations approach work. According to a recent report, [The State of the Digital Workplace](#) from Reworked, 72% of office-based organizations are now utilizing a hybrid work model – with employees alternating between remote work and working in the office.

With this in mind, organizations are assessing how they can proactively protect the health and well-being of everyone in today's changing workplace without inadvertently introducing exposure to new workplace safety risks.



Take the quiz to determine if your organization is doing all it can to protect hybrid employees.



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POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONSIDERATIONS

Make changes to policies and procedures to improve the way your employees work during the pandemic.

Have you updated your remote work policy based on recent COVID-19 guidance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Think about instituting a remote work policy to eliminate the opportunity for exposure in the workplace. Existing policy may require updating and should include specifics on the type of work that can be done remotely and the official procedure for requesting remote work.

Have you updated your sick policies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Updating sick and absence policies can help ensure sick employees stay home. Flexible sick leave policies, consistent with public health guidance, and policies that permit employees to stay home to care for ill family members are helpful.

Have you re-evaluated current scheduling practices to accommodate current COVID-19 guidance? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Implementing shift and schedule changes, such as staggered work shifts and breaks, eliminating the use of time clocks and timecards, and rotating weeks between home and office to cut down on interaction between people can help mitigate risk.

Evaluate how your new employee work areas are serving your organization. Do changes need to be made? Can adjustments be made to current configurations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Adjusting employees' work areas by eliminating desk and equipment sharing, requiring cleaning, or moving workstations to increase separation distance between workers is a helpful way to create a safe work environment during a pandemic.

Have you established infection prevention requirements, such as hand-washing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Establishing basic infection prevention measures for hygiene (hand washing, respiratory etiquette, etc.), updating the frequency of housekeeping practices, and using EPA-Registered Disinfectants are key. All employees should have training in disinfection procedures for specific operations, facilities, and work areas. Provide frequent reminders and re-training to keep best practices top-of-mind.



POLICY AND PROCEDURE CONSIDERATIONS

Have you updated your meeting protocols?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Establish new meeting protocols that include no handshake greetings, remaining six feet apart and using video or telephone conferencing instead of in-person client meetings.

Have you updated your travel policies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Retool your organization's travel policies to start with essential travel only — and define what that is. Discontinue non-essential travel to locations with ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks. Regularly check CDC travel warning levels, and continue to provide workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviors (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE).

Have you created new signage to communicate updated workplace policies?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Installing signage to communicate social distancing, cough and sneeze etiquette, proper hand hygiene and control, and other procedures is a critical step in creating a safe work environment for employees.



REMOTE WORK CONSIDERATIONS

Consider the new safety risks that a home office environment poses.

Have you provided employee guidance on reducing ergonomic hazards at home? ☐ Yes ☐ No

As the employer, you should be aware of hazards in the employees' work area and provide training based on common hazards related to emergency and disaster preparedness, electrical safety, fire safety, ergonomics, back safety, and slips, trips, and falls.

Are you providing safety training to all employees
— including those who only work from home?

☐ Yes ☐ No

In developing materials to support home office safety, consider flexible tools, such as online training, checklists, and communication, to drive adoption and reinforcement across the workforce.



PHYSICAL SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS IN THE OFFICE

Reduce workers' exposure to pandemic-related hazards by making your office a safer place to be.

Are you working with IT to establish reliable network connections?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Many employers are upgrading technology for seamless, reliable remote work and encouraging its use to minimize meetings and travel.

Have you assessed building ventilation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Improving ventilation in the office can reduce indoor air pollutants, including viruses, that are airborne. Consider adding high-efficiency air filters or otherwise increasing ventilation rates in your work environment.

Have you considered going hands-free?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Replacing frequently-touched equipment with hands-free versions, such as hands-free trash receptacles, can reduce the risk of spreading germs. Add sensors and no-touch technology for hands-free operation of doors, lighting, elevators, security systems, audio/visual equipment, height-adjustable tables, and task lights.

Establishing a solid plan is key to returning to business during a pandemic. Are you doing all you can to keep your employees safe ... from wherever they are working?

Learn more about compliance for a remote — or hybrid — workforce.

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