

SAFETY COMMUNICATION

— Back to Business

Recovery from COVID-19



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The federal government has announced that opening America again will be a phased-in process. Our own governor has announced that several hurdles must be crossed before we open all businesses and return from the stay-at-home orders. With that in mind, organizations need to start preparing for getting back to business as we proceed through the phases and cross those hurdles.

STEP 1 – Form a Recovery Team

Form a Recovery Team (Team) to develop your back-to-business plan. The Team may be comprised of your original Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Team (IDORT) but does not have to be. However, it should be comprised of representatives from all major departments and include at least one representative from the IDORT. It's important to include all departments as the phase-in process will not be same for them all. This team should meet now and continue to meet until the federal, state, and local governments have determined business activity restrictions due to infectious disease outbreak are no longer needed.

Charge the Team with:

- Monitoring infectious disease alerts and directives
- Identifying your organization's operational priorities

- Identifying what preparations are needed to meet back-to-business restrictions
- Assessing your workforce and asset status
- Developing a multi-phased plan to get back to business

STEP 2 – Monitor Infectious Disease Alerts and Directives

The federal government continuously issues infectious disease alerts and directives for control measures and the easing of restrictions. State governors across the nation are each determining what they believe to be right for their own states. Even within the states, counties and local governments have established their own set of infectious disease controls. It is critical for your Team to understand what control measures and restrictions are in place for your geographic location and type of operations in order to make feasible plans for a return to the new normal. One thing all the government entities seem to agree upon is that "normal" will not be same as it was prior to the infectious disease outbreak for a very long time.

Prevention in the Workplace

Employers can take an active role in preventing or limiting the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The CDC has developed recommended strategies for employers including:

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home or go home if they show signs of illness

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STEP 3 – Identify Operational Priorities

Have the Team identify what is most critical to your continued operations and survival. When phasing in full operations, which operations need to come back first, second, third? Which operations are most critical to revenue flow? Are there any operations that are unnecessary or can be put off to the last?

STEP 4 – What Preparations Are Needed to Meet Back to Business Restrictions

The back-to-business phases will vary depending on what information source you are reviewing, but they all agree that getting back to business needs to happen in phases. Phases that will be closely monitored for early detection of an escalation in infectious disease cases. They all agree the initial phases will still require social distancing, protective measures for vulnerable populations (the elderly and those with underlying health issues), health monitoring, testing, isolation, contact tracking, sanitation, restricted use and disinfection of high-traffic work areas, the use of personal protective equipment, and restricted business travel. Your Team needs to identify how your organization will meet the restrictions for each phase of back to business.

- Will the number of workstations need to be reduced, or will you stagger work shifts/days to maintain social distancing?
- How will you sanitize between shifts where there is no choice but to share the workstations?

- What permanent engineering controls, such as clear barriers between the public and your counter service employees need to be installed and where?
- What needs to be done to reduce contact with the public in areas where contact with the public is not critical to operations?
- Which work practices need to be altered?
- What employee training will be needed to gain employee compliance with the new rules/procedures?
- How will meeting the new restrictions affect the budget?



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STEP 5 – Assess Your Workforce and Asset Status

The phases of back to business are focused on keeping the number of infectious disease cases on a downward trend and protecting those most vulnerable to the infectious disease. In most phased plans, those employees who fall within the vulnerable category will be the last employees permitted to return to the workplace. How will that affect your operations? Will the number of seniors putting off retirement affect your operations? That number may be increasing as the current state of the economy takes its toll on retirement plans. Therefore, it is critical that human resources work with the Team to provide headcount information regarding the number of employees who can return to the workplace in each phase of the recovery plan. Due to HIPPA rules employees cannot be named, but human resources should be able to provide a headcount of the number employees who need to continue to work from home. This ties in with your Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan (IDORP) regarding which employees can continue to do their jobs from home.

STEP 6 – Develop a Multi-Phased Plan to Get Back to Business

After the Team has completed steps 2 through 5, it should have the information needed to develop a detailed plan for how



your organization will get back to business. As recovery continues, the Team will need to review and revise the recovery plan's phases to respond changes in infectious disease outbreak alerts and directives, as well as any financial challenges the organization may face.

Clear planning will help facilitate a safe return to business for your organization, your employees, and the people you serve.