

CDC Releases Guidelines for Reopening Workplaces

By Nancy Cleeland

May 15, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released a set of checklists to help leaders of businesses, schools, child care programs, mass transit and others decide when and how to reopen their facilities after weeks of closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The six one-page documents use traffic signals and other visual cues to move people through a three-step decision-making process.

In addition, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) issued a framework for a half-day workshop intended to help companies consider all contingencies when deciding how to reopen. SHRM has compiled stories about these new guidance documents from trusted sources and presented them here for your convenience.

SHRM RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

Coronavirus and COVID-19 (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/communicable-diseases.aspx)

Feedback

Ensure All Employees Are Protected, Intensify Cleaning

The decision tools the agency released recommend that all workplaces (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/workplace-decision-tree.pdf>) hold off on reopening unless they are ready to protect employees at higher risk for severe illness, including those 65 and older and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions.

If an organization can protect workers and goes forward with reopening, the CDC recommends intensifying cleaning and sanitation and establishing health and safety actions "as feasible," such as hand washing, wearing a cloth face covering and social distancing. The documents also advise employers to encourage workers to stay home if they feel sick. Schools, (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Schools-Decision-Tree.pdf>) childcare centers (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Childcare-Decision-Tree.pdf>) and camps (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Camps-Decision-Tree.pdf>) should not reopen, the guidelines stipulate, unless they are able to implement coronavirus screening protocols, evaluating employees and children daily for symptoms and potential past exposures to COVID-19. The flowchart-like documents released by the CDC also ask businesses, schools and workplaces to first and foremost consider whether adherence with the agency's reopening guidelines is consistent with state and local stay-at-home orders.

"It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community," the documents say.

(NPR (<https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/05/14/856483424/cdc-issues-decision-tools-to-guide-reopening-of-schools-businesses-transit>))

More Extensive Guidance Not Yet Posted

The CDC had also prepared even more extensive guidance—about 57 pages of it—that has not been posted. That longer document would give different organizations specifics about how to reopen while still limiting the spread of the virus, including by spacing workers or students 6 feet apart and closing break rooms and cafeterias to limit gatherings. Many of the suggestions already appear on federal websites, but they haven't been presented as reopening advice. Some health experts and politicians have been pushing for the CDC to release as much guidance as possible to help businesses and organizations decide how to proceed.

(Fox News (<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/cdc-posts-more-detailed-guidelines-for-reopening-country>))

New FEMA Kit Provides Framework for Reopening

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has released an Exercise Starter Kit to help companies discuss and work through how to safely reopen after weeks of coronavirus-related closures. The kit, which includes a customizable slide show and facilitator notes, provides a framework for a virtual half-day workshop or several shorter presentations that would ideally involve representatives throughout an enterprise, from HR to security.

(SHRM Online (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/employee-relations/Pages/coronavirus-return-fema.aspx?_ga=2.16248502.1888504880.1589192683-1674352536.1586953672))

Lessons on Reopening from Two Global Companies That Have Done It

Make detailed plans. Start small and expand incrementally. Always put the health and safety of employees first. And be prepared to learn and change. These are the big takeaways from conversations with leaders at international food giant Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) and China-based Internet search company Baidu, both of which have been restarting operations and bringing employees back to the workplace since late February, when China began to ease restrictions imposed to curtail the spread of COVID-19. On a webcast moderated by Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP, president and CEO of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), they shared lessons learned and cautioned U.S. businesses to take it slow.

(SHRM Online (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/employee-relations/Pages/COVID-Reopen-Baidu-ADM-Webcast.aspx?_ga=2.16248502.1888504880.1589192683-1674352536.1586953672))

Bringing Them Back: Questions for HR from Returning Workers

As employees begin to return to their workplaces after weeks under COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, they will have questions. After all, the world changed suddenly because of the deadly coronavirus pandemic and so have employees' expectations and fears. Be prepared by considering these six things employment attorneys and human resource experts say workers will want to know right from the start.

(SHRM Online (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/hr-topics/employee-relations/Pages/Bringing-Them-Back-Questions-for-HR-from-Returning-Workers.aspx?_ga=2.16248502.1888504880.1589192683-1674352536.1586953672))

HR DAILY NEWSLETTER

News, trends and analysis, as well as breaking news alerts, to help HR professionals do their jobs better each business day.

Email Address

**CONTACT US (WWW.SHRM.ORG/ABOUT-SHRM/PAGES/CONTACT-US.ASPX) | 800.283.SHRM
(7476)**

© 2020 SHRM. All Rights Reserved

SHRM provides content as a service to its readers and members. It does not offer legal advice, and cannot guarantee the accuracy or suitability of its content for a particular purpose.

[Disclaimer \(www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer\)](http://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/Pages/Terms-of-Use.aspx#Disclaimer)

Feedback