



Vaccinate The Natural State

Businesses Fighting COVID-19

IMPORTANT POINTS FOR EMPLOYERS



RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE: BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING A NEW NORMAL

I'm thinking about bringing my employees back to the workplace. Where do I start?

1. You need to decide:

- Which positions should be performed again in the workplace?
- Which roles can be performed at home from now on?
- Which positions can be performed as a combination of both?

2. Ask yourself who makes decisions regarding coming back to the workplace and what's the process for allowing exceptions. You could have one top leader making all the key decisions, a team of executives answering the questions, or you could ask for input from employees.

When should I bring employees back to the workplace?

Your reopening date should depend on the widespread availability of the vaccine. Whatever you decide, be prepared to adapt your plan as circumstances are frequently changing.

What can I do to make my employees' return to the workplace as smooth as possible?

Communication is the key to a successful return to the workplace. Throughout the pandemic, one of the most common traits of leading companies has been effective communication. The most effective messages are short, upbeat and reassuring, but not flowery. You should also keep employees informed of any policy updates and make the new policy language available for their review.

What will the workplace look like post-vaccine?

For now, we don't know what the workplace will look like post-vaccine. We have to continue to follow the science as it evolves to create and maintain safe work environments reflecting the latest information from the CDC and the Arkansas Department of Health.

Practically, this means you should:

- Enforce a maximum capacity for in-person meetings
- Establish a limit for your elevator(s)
- Create guidelines on how you will handle office food
- Maintain cleanliness in common areas.
- Have a more flexible sick leave policy or grant your employees more sick leave days for the year



Learn to flex.

One thing that leading businesses have learned during the pandemic is the value of changing quickly in a fluid environment. Flexibility ensures rapidly changing business needs are met and employees remain safe, according to constantly updated safety guidelines.

Source: Odell Nickelberry, Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield