

# Return Guidelines



When considering your return plans, the goal is to create a workplace experience that balances employee safety and wellness with effectiveness and productivity; this will include:

1. Defining processes protocols for employees returning and continuing to work in the office
2. Planning and implementing interim and long-term changes to the workplace
3. Defining the ongoing program to support employee remote work
4. Updating processes for cleaning the workplace – solo, team and community spaces
5. Planning and implementing the change communication program to engage employees in these new processes and protocols and ease their transition to the 'new norm' in the workplace

## RETURN TO WORK

1. Create recommendations for a staggering the initial employee return to the office:
  - a. This will ensure that new processes for working in the office can be tested and verified before everyone is returning
  - b. Recommend options to functional groups for staggering the return to and ongoing working in the office. This may be project, team, or work process based
2. Define and communicate protocols for returning to and continuing to work in the office, including:
  - a. Staggered arrival:
    - i. Start time: minimize traffic into and out of the building.
    - ii. Parking pattern to support social distancing
    - iii. Building entry; use side and rear doors to enter and leave the facility where available
  - b. Support/amenity space protocols:
    - i. Pantry use and occupancy: maximum number of occupants at any given time, cleaning options for coffee/drink dispensers.
    - ii. Bathroom use and occupancy; hand washing and door handle protections reminders

- iii. Staggered café seating: removing alternate seats or using signage/markings to identify 'off limits' seats
- c. Meeting and training room use
  - i. Set up requirements for training/meeting rooms to maintain social distancing
  - ii. Protocols for entering and leaving large meetings/training rooms; maintain clockwise traffic pattern
  - iii. Protocols for safe meetings – seating, using technology, walking around the room, working together at the white board, using markers, post-it notes, pins, etc.
- d. Defined pathways and directions for walking through the building; many organizations are defining clockwise paths based on experience in healthcare facilities
- e. Shared equipment cleaning – copy/printers, marker boards, monitors and video equipment

FACILITY CHANGES
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### BASE BUILDING

These changes need to be considered and completed by the building owner and/or tenant depending of occupancy and building use agreements.

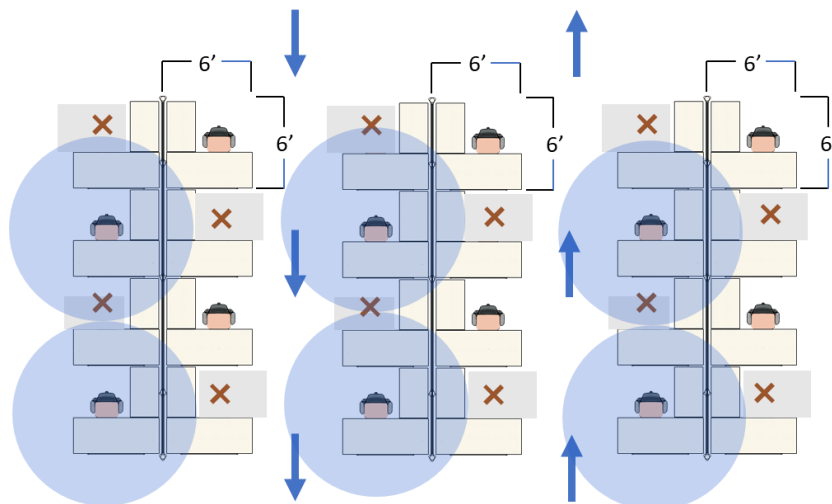
1. Immediate/prior to employee return to the office:
  - a. Entry and exist management protocols:
    - i. Parking lots/garage
    - ii. Building lobby
    - iii. Elevator lobbies
    - iv. Elevators
  - b. Cleaning processes for public spaces:
    - i. Lobbies
    - ii. Elevators/elevator lobbies
    - iii. Corridors
    - iv. Restrooms
    - v. Shared meeting and amenity spaces
  - c. Communicate the status of regular cleaning
    - i. What has been cleaned
    - ii. When it was cleaned – date and time
    - iii. Feedback mechanism
  - d. Use video and signage:
    - i. Remind occupants about new processes and protocols that have been implemented
    - ii. Reinforce individual responsibilities for supporting/maintaining a clean and safe facility

2. Long term:
  - a. Hands free entry and departure:
    - i. Parking and garage
    - ii. Building lobby
    - iii. Security check point
    - iv. Elevator
    - v. Tenant suite
    - vi. Restrooms
    - vii. Public amenity and shared use spaces
  - b. Indoor air quality improvements:
    - i. Fresh air intake
    - ii. Air recirculation
    - iii. Air filtering

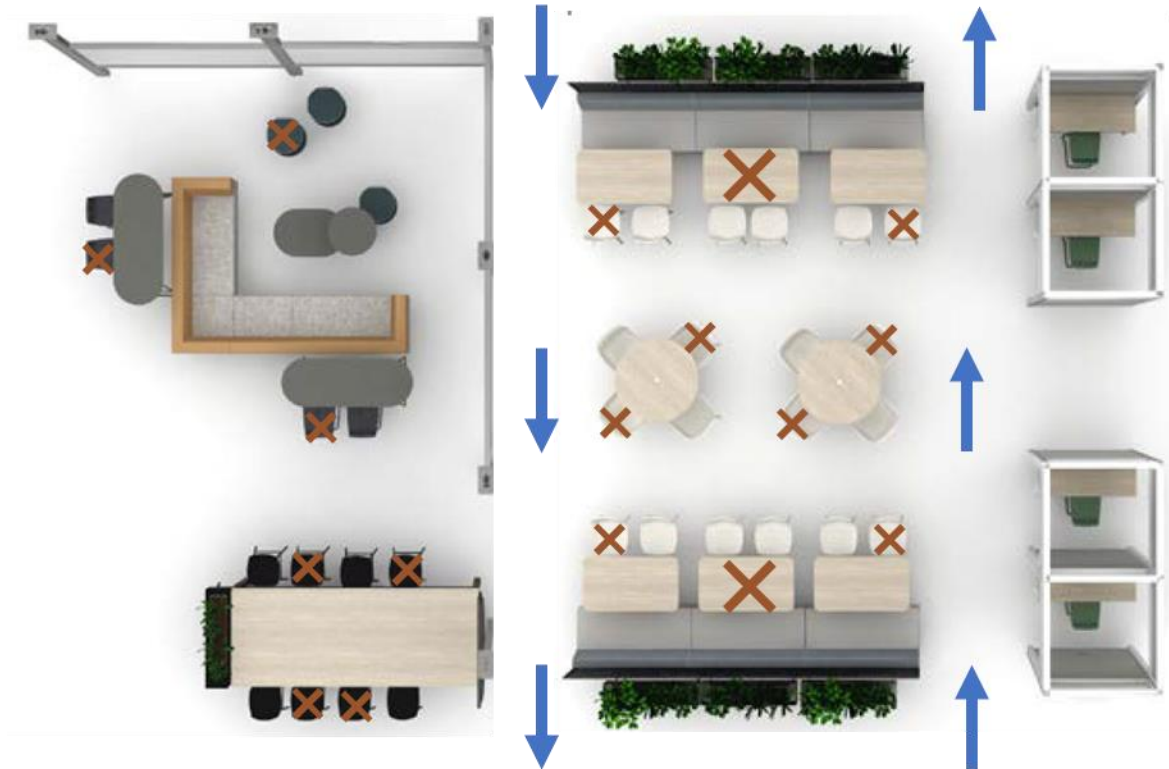
## FACILITY CHANGES

### WORKSPACES

1. Interim or short term:
  - a. Assess social distancing in open workstation areas, meeting rooms, and shared community spaces
  - b. Identify spaces/seating that should not be used in order to maintain social distancing; include staggered return to work options in defining these designations
  - c. Refresh workspaces to accommodate identified social distancing requirements:
    - i. Revise individual workspaces with additional panels, screens, moveable worksurfaces to increase separation
    - ii. Identify seats/workstations that may not be used
    - iii. Remove seating from shared spaces – meeting rooms, open collaboration, café, training, etc.



- d. Add social distancing signage/reminders to all workspaces support/encourage social distancing – where to sit, walking through the workspace, maximum occupancy, hand cleaning, using technology, collaborating at marker boards, etc.



2. Long term:
  - a. Replan workspaces as required to support recommended social distancing and ongoing remote work (see below): RE reductions from increased remote work may be balanced by the need for:
    - i. Larger workstations in the office to support social distancing
    - ii. More and larger conference rooms to support social distancing
    - iii. Replanned work spaces to facilitate easier movement through the building
    - iv. Replanned open collaboration areas to support flexibility and social distancing
    - v. New finish materials that are more easily cleaned
  - b. Update technology to facilitate robust virtual communication and web meetings
  - c. Update building security/entry systems to allow employees to use all building entries

## REMOTE WORK

Remote work will very likely be a more significant component of every organization's workplace strategy. The challenge will be to identify what features/components have worked well during the COVID crisis and translate them into a program that will be effective longer term.

1. Define 'remote work' to support your organization's work processes, activities, culture and business goals. policies to support expanded and/or ongoing remote work
  - a. It is not binary or a 'one size fits all' way of working
  - b. It may include:
    - i. Defined full or part time remote work
    - ii. Flexible part time remote work schedules,
    - iii. Flexible work day start and end times
    - iv. Any combination of the above
  - c. Team structure and individual team work processes/activities will determine how each individual will participate in/use this program (see below)
2. Develop, implement and communicate protocols for remote work (in all its forms) including:
  - a. Communication norms and protocols,
  - b. Availability when working remotely,
  - c. Guidelines for responding to emails, voice mails, texts,
  - d. Protocols for using text/IM to determine/verify when a team member is available.

Remember – if you are working in the office, you are 'remote' from those working elsewhere. And individual teams/functional groups may have their own versions of these protocols

3. Distribute tips and best practices for working effectively remotely
4. Outline guidelines for setting up a home office, including company support for outfitting a home office as appropriate.
5. Assess updated planning options to accommodate remote work, including:
  - a. desk sharing
  - b. additional meeting spaces
  - c. dedicated lockers/storage outside individual workstations.
6. Identify and/or quantify work processes and activities suitable for different remote work options:
  - a. Linear vs integrated/collaborative processes
  - b. Technology integration into/support of work processes
  - c. Requirements for specific objects, tools or equipment to work effectively
  - d. Consistent use of creative thinking/brainstorming to work effectively
  - e. Coordination with other teams and/or functional groups
  - f. Home set up/situation unsuitable for remote work
7. Identify and implement training required for improving remote work effectiveness:
  - a. Communication skills – individual and team
  - b. Virtual team meeting facilitation
  - c. Managing remote teams
  - d. Technology use and application – communication, web meeting, knowledge sharing
  - e. Time management

## FACILITY CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

1. Identify updated cleaning standards that will be implemented and adhered to.
2. Coordinate required changes with cleaning contractors and crews
3. Identify employees' responsibilities for supporting/participating in maintaining a clean facility – personal, individual workspaces, café tables and seating, white boards, conference/training tables, etc.
4. Define programs to communicate ongoing cleaning progress to all employees – just saying it's being done is not enough.

## SOURCES

<https://www.theinformation.com/articles/my-predictions-for-the-next-decade>  
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*No practices contained herein will guaranty that COVID-19 will not be transmitted. The practices recommended in this book are based on knowledge at time of publication, recognizing the planning for a post-pandemic world is a rapidly changing and learning experience.”*