

RETURN-TO-THE-WORKPLACE:  
**A SAMPLE FRAMEWORK**



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# A Sample Framework: Designing a Master Plan

The decision to return to the workplace is one that is not taken lightly and deserves a well thought out plan. At Transwestern, we designed a customized plan in support of reopening our offices in accordance to state, city, local guidelines, and the CDC guidance. This plan is a combination of key deliverables to equip leadership with the necessary guidance and tools as we transition our teams back to the workplace. We are pleased to share these tools with you to help shape your approach in reopening your office.

For us, preparation of the workplace was tailored to each office, but in each case designed to (1) comply with state, city and local orders, and (2) reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Apart from the physical layout of the office, employee behaviors and practices play a critical role in maintaining a healthy workplace. We set our policies around helping our employees find the right comfort level in their return to the workplace.

At Transwestern, we have developed our master plan to reopen our offices using these considerations and structured our expectations around four major themes. We hope you find these components useful as you consider your own master plan to return to the workplace:

- Determining When to Return to the Workplace
- Preparing the Workplace
- Maintaining a Healthy Workplace
- Communicating with Employees About Their Return to the Workplace




This guide is a high-level plan and we strongly encourage you to engage with your local resources to best set your return to the workplace.

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## Determining When to Return to the Workplace

As you organize your decision to return to the workplace, you should take into account internal and external factors. At Transwestern, we asked ourselves these questions to design our corporate plan and help city leaders understand and determine their local plan for reopening.




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-  **Are we following government orders?**  
Follow government guidelines and orders when determining your ability to return to the workplace. Keep in mind that while certain restrictions may be lifted, new restrictions may be implemented.
-  **Have we ensured safe workplace access?**  
Contact your building management team to understand their reopening plan and be certain it aligns with your requirements. It will be important to ensure a healthy environment for your employees.
-  **Have we properly assessed our company's readiness?**  
When deciding on the timing for your return to the workplace, the following should be considered:
  - The individual needs and special circumstances of employees.
  - Weighing the necessity of physical presence vs. remote working.
  - Your company's completion and implementation of its plan.

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## Preparing the Workplace

To allow for a smooth transition back to the workplace, you should ensure your organization and leaders are ready to receive employees by providing clear expectations, procedures and protocols outlined in your plan. At Transwestern, our plan defines what to expect in the workplace environment—expectations of Transwestern as well as our employees—to make for a healthy return.

-  **Determine what procedures are required to ensure all locations are ready to open.**
-  **Determine your organization's policy on remote working vs. working in the physical office.**  
Set expectations and guidelines to effectively communicate your policy to team members.
-  **Define expectations around cleaning protocols.**  
Include any requirements for providing cleaning products at either the organization or employee level as well as who is responsible for cleaning the various spaces within your offices.

-  **Include CDC and government requirements to support social distancing.**  
Combine CDC recommendations with your organization's policies to determine which practices are mandatory and enable you to develop physical office condition protocols.  
  
An example of many of these rules and guidelines for employees to follow can be found in our [Return-to-the-Workplace Sample Employee Guide](#).

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# Have More Questions?

We can provide you additional resources and insight to help you plan.

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## Maintaining a Healthy Workplace

Establishing protocols to protect the workplace is critical to create a healthy workplace for employees. At Transwestern, we outlined expected behaviors around team member health, the general work environment, visitor policies, and travel policies.



### Have you considered what to do if an employee is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or is sick in any way?

Decide and communicate expectations for team members in relation to COVID-19 exposure and other illnesses. An example plan chart is available in the [Return-to-the-Workplace Sample Employee Guide](#) for our team members who:

- Have COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Have been exposed to COVID-19 but are asymptomatic.
- Are in high risk categories for infection.



### What is the plan for travel?

Address international, domestic and personal travel as appropriate for your organization.



### How will you handle staffing?

Establish if, and what, a scheduled rotation would look like at your organization for team members to return to the workplace. An example plan chart is available in the [Return-to-the-Workplace Sample Employee Guide](#).



### What is your visitor policy?

Define expectations around visitor protocols to your workplace. Be sure to understand the building's expectations as well. This could have a range of outcomes based on location and office type.






### Have you considered measures to reduce environmental touch points?

Evaluate your physical office environment and assess if it is necessary to address areas that are communal high touch. Considerations could include:

- Doors
- Meal consumption locations
- Storage and displays for reusable or single use dishes/silverware
- Storage for communal office supplies
- Touchscreen displays

## Communicating with Employees About Their Return to the Workplace

Design a communication plan along with your corporate guidance to distribute at all of the appropriate levels. At Transwestern, our plan incorporates the following items and considerations:

-  **Are we following local orders?**  
Take state, city and local rules regarding occupancy and social distancing into consideration before communicating with team members.
-  **Are we being flexible?**  
Understand plans may change as conditions related to COVID-19 change and communicate changes effectively as they occur.
-  **Have we clearly communicated “The Plan” and date of return to employees?**  
Clearly communicate your organization’s position regarding remote versus physical presence and the expectations that surround both.

### Disclaimer

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