Coronavirus Advisory: Getting the Workforce Back to the Workplace

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Impact of COVID-19 On The Workplace

Stay at home orders issued March 2020:

- Many work lives disrupted, routines changed.
- Some gathered equipment and started telecommuting, while others stayed behind.
- Internet accessibility in the home became a priority.
- No longer had socialization of workplace friends and colleagues.
- Employees who reported to work, endured new screening protocols and required to maintain 6 feet of separation.
- Essential travel only, no in-person meetings.
- No school and limited childcare presented problems for working parents.
- Employees experienced a range of emotions like fear and anxiety.
- Financial concerns over job loss or limited work hours.
Impact of COVID-19 On The Workplace

Weeks into the Stay at Home Order:

- Many have settled into a “new normal” and are now better able to cope.
- Less fearful of the pandemic; screening and sanitizing have become second nature.
- Less traffic congestion and more efficient use of time for those conducting essential travel.
- Demands on personal time are minimized.
- Coffee breaks and working lunches look very different.
- Many are interacting with coworkers through media platforms like Zoom or Go To Meeting.
- Businesses have found new ways to create workflow efficiencies, and provide services virtually.
- The nation is cautiously optimistic, and ready to move forward.
And now we have to transition back to...
...And this
Potential Challenges Getting Employees Back to the Workplace

- Altered/staggered hours.
- Modified plant or office configuration.
- Changed job duties.
- Transportation.
- Childcare/family concerns.
- Lost employees to other employers/staffing.
- Some employees vulnerable to the virus.
- Some employees reluctant to return to work.
- Possibility of COVID-19 flare up.
Responding to Challenges

- Develop plan to resume business.
- At a minimum, follow direction of federal and local authorities and comply with “Phase-in” guidance regarding controls and type of business.
- Consider what changes to staff could have occurred while closed or reduced-staffing.
- Communicate on a frequent basis with staff. To the extent possible get feedback and implement suggestions that will make transition back to workplace as smooth as possible.
- Attempt to be flexible and work with employees to establish work schedule that meets needs.
- Be empathetic and work with employees that have reservations about returning/safety concerns.
- Develop a COVID-19 exposure plan.
Elements of COVID-19 Exposure Plan

1. Responsibilities of managers, supervisors and employees.
2. Workplace protective measures.
3. Workplace cleaning and disinfecting.
5. OSHA recordkeeping.
Challenges Resuming Production and Delivery of Services

- Continued business uncertainty.
- Building, equipment & staffing issues:
  - Moving equipment back to office.
  - Start up of idle equipment/machines.
  - Safety sensitive functions.
  - Supply chain/vendors.
  - Ability to source product to run business.
  - Quality of raw materials.
- Mental and physical condition of employees:
  - Stress.
  - Work conditioning.
  - Refresher training.
  - New employees.
Responding to Challenges

- Remain flexible and forecast best case and worse case scenarios.
- Establish procedures for return to work by job function/hours:
  - Phase in plan for employee return.
  - Document compliance of government mandates.
- Pre-start inspection and testing of equipment.
- Be aware of de-conditioning:
  - Consider stretch & flex program.
  - Job rotations.
- Take time to rescreen existing associates or screen new hires.
- Provide appropriate training or refresher training.
- Follow Business Continuity Plan.
Address Gaps In Risk Management

Determine gaps in programs and assess the need for program improvement:

- Formalize work from home programs.
- Assess effectiveness of cyber security.
- Pandemic emergency response/business resiliency.
- Novel risks presented by the pandemic.
Federal, State and Local Compliance

- OSHA & other regulatory agencies:
  - Program Assessments.
  - Safety Training.
  - Written program/policy review.
  - Formalized procedures.
  - Residual COVID-19 guidance and enforcement.

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act:
  - Understand parameters and exceptions.
  - Firing or disciplining of employees refusing to return to do job functions.
  - Employees refusing to return to work all together.

- State and Local Government.
Claim/Legal Considerations

Hired Non-Owned Auto Liability
- For businesses who begin delivery of product, employee’s auto insurance may not cover loss:
  - Exclusion on the Personal Auto Policy for business.
  - Uninsured/Underinsured.

Workers’ Compensation
- Ergonomic issues from poor workspace design.
- Back strains due to deconditioning.
- Stress.
- Positive test for coronavirus
- Employers Liability.
Claim/Legal Considerations

Directors and Officers Liability

- Corporate decisions affecting stock prices.
- Allegations of mismanagement of the company like the health and safety of employees, or protecting the security of data.

Employment Practices

- Allowing hourly employees to telecommute then pulling them back to the office.
- Allowing only certain employees work from home opportunities.
- Essential employees being made to take on additional duties.
- Inconsistent screening and onboarding of associates.
In Summary

- The way we are working in this pandemic is temporary. Employers need to make a plan to return to “normal”.
- Develop a well thought out strategy that systematically brings your employees back and resumes operations.
- This has been an incredibly stressful experience for everyone including employees. Be sure to communicate clearly and be empathetic regarding their individual situation.
- Be flexible. Employees, suppliers, and customers have all been impacted by the pandemic.
- Reflect on lessons learned. What have you learned as a result of your response? What would you do differently in retrospect? Are there lessons learned that can actually improve operations?
- Continue to adhere to governmental agency advice; federal and local, that are prescribing safety measures as the exposure to COVID-19 evolves.

Reach out to your McGriff team if you have questions or need assistance.
For More Information

Here at McGriff, nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of our clients, partners and teammates. As COVID-19 continues to impact the world around us, we're committed to providing the guidance our clients and partners need from us during this unprecedented time.

For more information – please visit our Coronavirus Resource Center:
