



Work Forward >> Together

A Practical Back-to-Business Primer

For Occupiers / Tenants &
Investors / Landlords

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OVERVIEW

Municipalities and business leaders are grappling with their own understanding of how business should proceed when states ease “shelter-in-place” restrictions.

As with everything associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying consistent timing and a priority plan for day one is crucial to successfully reopening businesses and getting tenants and employees back to their places of employment with confidence.

With each state widely differing on economic, re-entry requirements and timing, there are some conflicts between markets. Concerns of future crises may drive a movement back to quarantine measures should a resurgence of the virus require businesses to return to “emergency response” mode.

The **Work Forward » Together** back-to-business primer—designed by a cross-functional committee of Colliers’ key subject matter experts—serves as a practical, succinct checklist of activities and considerations for landlords and tenants as they prepare to reopen their physical workspaces and buildings. In addition to preparatory, pre-opening activity, the guide offers mission-critical activities to implement on day one, and in subsequent critical periods. The primer considers short-term action steps as well as long-term initiatives for portfolio and workforce strategy, both of which are important to consider as business priorities evolve.

Embedded in the spirit of Work Forward » Together is the need to monitor and communicate early, compellingly and as often as necessary to ensure a smooth transition, ultimate steady state operations, the ability to maintain readiness should there be roadblocks, and ultimately stakeholder comfort and satisfaction.



Underpinning all plans for occupiers and investors is the spirit of partnership and collaboration between key stakeholders within each focus area, as well as among each other. This active collaboration between occupier and investor groups, unearthed undeniable commonalities and a sincere desire to do what’s in the best interest of our respective client stakeholders, our partners and the communities we serve. **We all win when that is the goal.**



INITIAL INSIGHTS

Colliers 2020 Global Workplace
Work-From-Home Survey

What do people
miss most about
working in the
office?

Collaborating
with colleagues
in person

63%

Bumping into
coworkers

53%

Work-life and
home-life
separation

47%

Non-work related
conversations with
colleagues

42%

Spontaneous
meetings

37%

Regular
lunches

23%

Easier access
to managers

19%

Clarity of
priorities

7%



WORKING SCHEDULE for Investors / Landlords

Stakeholders:

Building Manager, Tenants, Tenant Amenity Providers, Project Managers, Vendor/Supplier Partners



Prior to Returning to the Workplace

1. Consider service needs and scope arrangements for building managers. Preorder inventory as needed for several months' supply.
 - *Safety supplies (sanitizer, masks, gloves, wipes, face shields)*
 - *Common area/high traffic cleaning enhancement (elevator, common eating areas, ingress/egress access)*
 - *Food service adjustments – mobile ordering availability*
2. Evaluate building readiness, plant and equipment operational status.
 - *Ensure fire, life and safety standards are fully compliant and risk mitigated*
 - *Domestic water lines are to be exercised for one minute daily*

- *Toilets and floor drains are to be flushed to fill P traps*
- *Condenser or process water to be tested*
- *Common area fixture configuration, technology adjustments (e.g. touchless systems for elevators and door handles)*
- *Protective/self-cleaning touch point films (NanoSpetic, for example)*

3. Review and implement communication plan with tenants (see more details below).



The First Day Back

1. Post safety and wellness standards, date and adjust as required.
2. Establish regular safety review check-ins with key tenant designees.
3. Understand tenant “back-to-work” phasing plans.
4. Implement clear signage befitting appropriate distance standards, directions.
5. Increase cleaning visibility and frequency on high touch points.
6. Implement ASHRAE standards to increase outdoor air ventilation (use caution in highly polluted areas); this increases the effective dilution ventilation per person.
7. Disable demand-controlled ventilation (DCV).
8. Further open minimum outdoor air dampers—as high as 100%—to reduce air recirculation (in mild weather seasons).
9. Improve central air filtration to the MERV-13 (or the highest compatible) with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit particle bypass.
10. Keep systems running longer hours to enhance the two actions above.
11. Consider portable room air cleaners with HEPA filters.
12. Consider UVGI (ultraviolet germicidal irradiation),



WORKING SCHEDULE for Investors / Landlords *(cont'd)*

Stakeholders:

Building Manager, Tenants, Tenant Amenity Providers, Project Managers, Vendor/Supplier Partners



The First Week Back

1. Review status of measures placed for effectiveness; enact adjustments as necessary.
2. Ensure rapid response measures (reporting, deep cleaning) and any shutdown procedures are in place should a reemergence of the virus occur.
3. Evaluate inventory to determine if preorder preparations are aligning with actual needs.
4. Schedule “lessons learned” meetings at the local, regional and national level.
3. Review and decommission excess space, monitor for safety considerations.
4. Consider real estate policies available to assist landlords and tenants in operating plans (e.g. moratoriums on evictions or mortgage payments).
5. Evaluate ASHRAE standards to determine if/when mechanical ventilation guidance on operation and filtration is needed.



The First 1 - 3 Months and Beyond

1. Review operating budgets for adjustments given increased cleaning and maintenance expenditures and government requirements.
2. Evaluate or continue to evaluate energy cost savings



WORKING SCHEDULE for Occupiers / Tenants

Stakeholders:

Service line leaders, market leaders, shared service functions (HR, IT, Operations, Legal, Finance), vendor/supplier partners, landlords, tenant amenity providers, employees, project/construction management



Prior to Returning to the Workplace

1. Establish a strategic plan to identify and communicate thoughtful/gradual work arrangements and safety protocols by location. Consider multi-phased reopenings and shifts for employees to maintain physical distancing requirements. Recognize that many employees may wish to continue working from home and that employers will likely need to allow for this option.
 - Determine essential workforce required to return to the office and who can remain working remotely from home.
 - Update or strengthen work-from-home policies, practices, equipment and support to continue to enable a work-from-home option.
 - Consider a plan for mental wellness support by including options for quiet rooms and meditation space.
 - Assign roles and establish procedures for 1) dealing with employees or visitors exhibiting symptoms – train receptionist to recognize symptoms 2) keeping sanitizers, PPE and other new items up-to-date 3) training

employees on protocols for hygiene. Require mandatory online training to “qualify” to return to work.

2. Review and evaluate current space plan including common areas, workstations etc.
 - Reconfigure workstations to meet distancing standards.
 - Establish one-way corridors to minimize six-foot distancing conflicts.
 - Pre-order or repurpose partitions and temporary panels to separate workstations, lobby/reception etc.
 - Consider wellness rooms located near the entrance to provide safe space for entering/exiting the workplace.
 - Develop signage and a navigation plan for display on distancing and office navigation patterns.
3. Consider and implement comprehensive service needs and space arrangements for employees. Preorder inventory as needed for several months’ supply.

Examples:

- Safety supplies (sanitizer, masks, gloves, wipes, face shields).
 - Increased workspace cleaning of high-touch points.
 - Temperature monitoring by trained professionals.
 - Workspace configuration, technology adjustments (e.g. touchless systems for elevators, door handles, etc.).
 - Kitchen, meeting room and common area congregation requirements.
 - Mailroom accommodations/locker alternatives.
4. Review conceptual schedule and cost implications of future changes to space; identify and engage project management resources (as needed) to oversee changes to workplace and deploy as many short-term solutions and changes to space as possible. Document for communications to ensure a proactive focus for returning employees on the first day back.
 5. Receive and review re-entry plan with landlord; understand building safety requirements and protocols



WORKING SCHEDULE for Occupiers / Tenants *(cont'd)*

Stakeholders:

Service line leaders, market leaders, shared service functions (HR, IT, Operations, Legal, Finance), vendor/supplier partners, landlords, tenant amenity providers, employees, project/construction management



The First Day Back

1. Have posted safety guidelines and physical distancing signage, date and adjust as required.
2. Launch “open office” communications for in-office and remote employees. Orient staff to location of supplies and safety work order request protocol.
3. Establish physical distancing and other protocols to reflect state and local guidelines and norms; adjust in a slow, measured way and communicate accordingly. Communicate and recommunicate.
4. Communicate visitor protocols.
5. Deploy ongoing employee health and wellness for in-office and remote workers.
6. Provide a “roadmap” of future changes that will occur to the space with estimated timeframes, impact to space and create a message of positivity with team.



The First Week Back

7. Review status of measures placed for effectiveness; enact adjustments, as necessary.
8. Ensure rapid response measures (reporting, deep cleaning) and any shutdown procedures are in place should a reemergence of the virus occur.
9. Begin to have project management team lead reporting and communication on weekly updates of current upgrades and changes, as well as a look ahead at future improvements and changes.



The First 1 - 3 Months and Beyond

1. Review occupancy and capital expenditures for adjustments given increased cleaning and maintenance expenditures, furniture and technology adjustments and governance requirements.
2. Review current and future business and portfolio requirements upon office return. Balance physical and virtual considerations for all employee populations. Consider flexible space in your strategy.
3. Assess productivity during preliminary period against preventive measures; adjust technology, workspace requirements, location accordingly in conjunction with affected employee and manager. Monitor attendance needs for capacity adjustments.
4. Reassess status of long-term and return-to-normal and decide what needs to be permanent and what will continue to adjust regarding density, partitions distancing, personal and remote work.



INSIGHTS

Monitoring the Broader Picture

Against the backdrop of these short and long-term activities is a constantly evolving environment of federal and state standards, guidance from the **World Health Organization** and **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, funding programs and other industry-wide and local community endeavors.

Initial things to consider throughout:

- National public policy trends
- Adjustments to state guidelines
- Incidents of COVID-19 diagnoses within office/building, market and state (as a predictor of future plan adjustments)
- Communication protocols, employee check-ins (in office or remote)
- Supplier compliance to cleaning and safety standards, in tenant and common area spaces
- Productivity trends

COMMUNICATIONS

Employee Communications and Relations is Mission Critical

Simple, clear and ongoing communications with constituents and key stakeholders is crucial to enabling safer workplaces that comply with health and wellness standards set by the company and government/health regulators. It's important to keep in mind that every day we are flooded with information about changes and new measures enacted by regulators and companies. Hearing directly from your employer and team minimizes confusion among your stakeholders and will create trust and confidence in the measures that you are putting in place to keep them safe. Building and cultivating these relationships with authentic and direct communications is the foundation of getting back to business successfully.

All communications should be frequent and deliberate when reaching key stakeholders in physical and virtual work environments.

Communications considerations:



1. Forming a strong partnership and routine communication channel between market or regional leadership, office operational staff, human resource business partners, and supplier and landlord relationships will be critical to establish and maintain a smooth transition.



2. Create a routine communication schedule and calendar of topics established up front and deliver to appropriate constituents.



3. Leverage a standard set of channels and communication vehicles to reach your audience. You want to make sure they know where they can expect to hear from you and get information.



4. Explore different channels and communications vehicles that will help drive your message and are being used most by audience. These may include:

- Email
- Webinars
- Text messages
- Company intranet
- Social media
- Physical signage
- Pop-up notifications on company devices (i.e. computers)



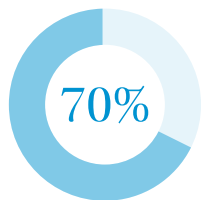
5. Create a mechanism to receive and review feedback. Collecting employee and stakeholder feedback enables you to constantly review and adopt new ideas and best practices. This is fundamental to reinforcing your commitment to building a safer workplace.

NEW NORMAL

Leverage Your Recent Work-From-Home Experience

As you build your back-to-business strategy, it's important to consider and identify how this recent work-from-home experience can influence the way your business operates in the future and can enable less traffic and density in your physical workspace.

The Colliers Global Work-from-Home Survey [🔗](#) has collected real-time data from more than 4,000 respondents in more than 25 countries from 15 different industries who are working from home. The data has uncovered compelling insights that should be considered when building your strategy for the future.

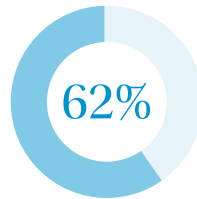


% of employees who would like to continue working from home

Your people want to work from home more often.

Of the people that never worked from home before COVID-19, 70% want to work from home at least one day a week. Enabling your workforce with the ability to work remotely can minimize the amount of people

saturating your physical workspace. You may want to identify which roles and departments can effectively work remotely and create a rotation.

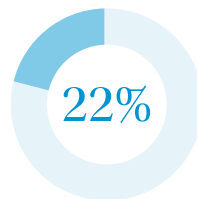


% of employees who feel their work-life balance has improved

Working from home can improve employee engagement.

On average, 62% of respondents indicated that their work-life balance has improved since working from home. This is an important aspect of a healthy work environment.

Maintaining work-life balance helps reduce stress and helps prevent burnout in the workplace. Chronic stress is one of the most common health issues in the workplace. It can lead to physical consequences such as hypertension, digestive troubles, chronic aches and pains and heart problems. Chronic stress can also negatively impact mental health because it's linked to a higher risk of depression, anxiety and insomnia.



% of employees who indicated a decrease in productivity

Productivity doesn't have to suffer.

It's common for some companies to think working from home means a less productive workforce. Our research has found that actually only 22% of respondents indicate their productivity decreased, with

individuals who have experience working from home being impacted the least. While this does vary depending on the industry (with sales, education & research and retail reporting a higher decrease), there is a real opportunity to enable and empower a work culture that allows your people to do their best work from home. Investing in tools and resources to strengthen how your teams manage business virtually can go a long way to building a safer and healthier workplace.

RESOURCES

For More Information

Colliers has produced a number of timely thought leadership pieces and key checklists focused on various aspects of the pandemic crisis, its impact on workplace and how to navigate to steady-state operation. We have provided companion articles and how-to references guides relevant to a return-to-business strategy below.

Colliers Resources:

- [🔗 The Great Return – Making the Workplace Ready](#)
- [🔗 COVID-19 Considerations for Occupiers](#)
- [🔗 COVID-19 Impact on Global Occupiers \(Webinar Recording | Slide Deck\)](#)
- [🔗 *Continuing the Conversation – COVID-19's Impact to Global Occupiers \(Webinar Follow-Up\)*](#)
- [🔗 *Continuing the Conversation – Flexible Workplace Solutions During COVID-19 \(Webinar Follow-Up\)*](#)
- [🔗 Managing Buildings in the Aftermath of COVID-19](#)

Other Third-Party Resources:

- [🔗 U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Implementing a National Return to Work Plan](#)
- [🔗 WHO: Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19](#)
- [🔗 IFMA: Pandemic Preparedness Manual](#)
- [🔗 CDC: Keeping your workplace safe](#)

CALL TO ACTION

Organizational Considerations



Form a Business Continuity Task Force
(HR, IT, RE, Communications)



Assess your existing conditions - work from home and workplace



Stagger re-entry and develop a strategic plan with leadership



Balance physical distancing with effective work practices



Develop policies and communications, advocating for personal empowerment



Partner with your landlord



SERVICES

How Can Colliers Help?

The Work Forward » Together program recognizes, assesses and delivers responsive and enterprising occupier and investor/landlord real estate services to fit the various stages of transition companies (and their properties/facilities and workplace/workforce) are in during the pandemic. Our experts are able to quickly and collaboratively resolve mission critical property or portfolio issues and transition our clients into steady state operations and future growth.

Occupier Services

- Back-to-Work Navigator
- Occupancy Cost Audits
- Workplace Strategy
- Project Management / Space Retrofits
- Transaction Strategy
- Flexible Workspace Restructuring
- Lease / Asset Dispositions
- Workforce Analytics
- Portfolio Strategy

Investor Services

- Property Management
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Procurement
- Advisory
- Project Management
- Property Tax

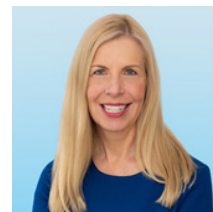
A complete breakdown of service capabilities for occupiers and investors may be found [here](#). 

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We're in this together.

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