


Return-to-office guide

- ▶ 10 steps to create a **safe office** environment
- ▶ Tips for **in-person meetings** and seminars



You likely already have a first-aid kit, a “fix-a-flat” kit, or an emergency supply kit. **It may now make sense for you to have a COVID-compliance kit for your office, too.**

Clients want to know you’re taking steps to ensure their safety when visiting your office. But how to start?

We’re here to help. Here are tips and ideas from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on **safely returning to your office, in-person meetings, and seminars.**

This guide can help to generate discussion and plans with **the goal of creating a safe environment for clients and visitors.** For more information on these subjects and more, please refer to the CDC’s resuming business toolkit¹.

Continually monitor and adhere to federal, state, and local public health communications about COVID-19.

1. Source: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/resuming-business-toolkit.html#keep-safe

Ten steps to create a safe office environment:

Assess:

Assess the importance of essential functions, facilities, and maintenance.

Examples:

- Check workplace for hazards that might expose people to COVID-19.
- Conduct regular inspections of all procedures, equipment, work areas, and bathrooms.
- Review and alter business practices where you see fit.
- Assess and prioritize job functions to resume business in phases.
- Look over ventilation system and increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system.

Please practice
social distancing



Please practice
social distancing



Please practice
social distancing



2. Identify:

Identify protective measures and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for interactions between staff and the public.

Examples:

- Identify and purchase appropriate engineering, administrative, and personal protective equipment (PPE) options for your workplace, such as face masks, eye protection, gloves, etc.
- Enforce protective measures for employees, such as:
 - ▶ Taking temperatures and completing daily health screenings.
 - ▶ If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19, they should notify you and follow CDC-recommended guidelines at home until they meet criteria to resume work at the office.
 - ▶ If someone in their household has COVID-19, they should notify you and stay home.
 - ▶ Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - ▶ Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - ▶ Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment.
 - ▶ Cover mouth and nose with a tissue or inside of the elbow when coughing or sneezing - immediately throw tissue in trash, then wash hands.

3.

Develop a plan:

Develop a daily routine cleaning and disinfecting plan.

Examples:

- Door knobs
- Light switches
- Tables
- Chairs
- Any other frequently-used items in your office
- Computers
- Bathrooms
- Pens
- Phones

▶ When choosing cleaning chemicals, consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens.

Develop an action plan for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, and a plan for continued health monitoring.

- Understand who else in the company may have been in contact with individuals affected and may need to take additional precautions.
- Inform employees through a phone tree or communication plan of their possible exposure to COVID-19, but maintain confidentiality.
- Close off areas that the impacted employee may have used for long periods (such as their desk), and wait at least 24 hours to clean and disinfect the area.
- Identify cross-training opportunities in case key employees are suddenly unable to work or return to the office.
- Follow the Public Health Recommendations for Community-Related Exposure.



4. Communicate:

Communicate with your team, contractors, and onsite visitors the actions you are taking to control the spread of COVID-19.

Examples:

- Post signs reminding visitors and employees of changes.
 - ▶ Download pre-made signs, floor decals, and more by scanning the QR code on [page 7](#).
- Update your website and social media channels with current hours, guidelines, and precautions.
- Make calls prior to client appointments outlining what they should expect when they arrive, and the safety precautions you've implemented.
 - ▶ View our sample script templates by scanning the QR code on [page 7](#).
- Make sure employees always have access to current information.

5. Modify:

Modify the workplace to increase physical space between employees, clients, and visitors.

Examples:

- Use plexiglass dividers as a barrier between employees, visitors, etc.
- Remove or rearrange furniture to increase physical distance between sitting areas and work spaces.
- Close or limit the use of shared spaces, such as break rooms or water fountains.
- Place floor decals six-feet apart in front of bathrooms, front desk areas, etc.

6.

Supply:

Supply employees, clients, and visitors with the items they need to stay safe.

Examples:

- Disposable masks
- Tissues
- No-touch trashcan
- No-touch hand sanitizer stations
- Individually packaged antibacterial wipes
- No-touch button/door tool



7.

Train:

Train staff on policies and plans, social distancing guidelines, use of PPE, and safe work practices.

Examples:

- Communicate new expectations clearly and often. The biggest barrier to communication is assuming it has occurred.
- Communicate CDC updates of COVID-19 symptoms.
- Demonstrate proper use of face coverings and other PPE.
- Make important shared documents easily accessible to all employees whether in the office or home, and demonstrate how to access them.

8.

Implement:

Implement plans, policies, and practices that are flexible and supportive.

9.

Adjust:

Adjust plans, policies, and functions as the situation evolves and the CDC updates their recommendations.

10.

Perform:

Perform your job duties safely and successfully!

We've got you covered:

Visit our website to access these helpful resources:

Including:

- Printable signs for your office (hand washing guidelines, front door or reception area instructions)
- A sample script to help discuss what clients may need to know and remember when coming into your office
- Hosting virtual meetings guide and checklist



Scan the QR code with your phone camera to navigate to the digital resource site.

Or visit NorthAmericanCompany.com/digital





Tips for **in-person meetings and seminars:**

10

Read our '**10 steps to create a safe and productive office environment.**'



Use verbal announcements, signs, and visual cues to **promote social distancing.**



Evaluate the facility and space to ensure everyone can maintain proper social distancing guidelines.



Transform the workplace to increase physical space by placing plexiglass dividers, removing furniture, or separating furniture to create six feet of spacing.



Determine an appropriate number of people that can attend while still maintaining six feet apart. Collaborate with local health officials and **check state, county, and city rules regarding any current restrictions** limiting the number of attendees at events.



Use an **online sign-up sheet** to reduce the number of attendees and visitors in the office at a time. If possible, **offer online attendance options** as an alternative to in-person attendance.



Provide physical cues – such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls – to ensure that individuals remain at least six feet apart at all times.



Limit contact with surfaces and individuals. Use technology to promote and share flyers, guides, or other materials.



Execute a safe and successful meeting while protecting clients and their retirement.



West Des Moines, IA 50266
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