



The Standards for excellence

An Ethics & Accountability Program for the Nonprofit Sector

**Standards for Excellence Institute
Sample COVID-19
Back-to-Work Checklist and Procedures
5/27/2020**

NOTE: This is a sample checklist and procedures guide only. The best policies are custom fit to an organization. Key considerations include size, mission, type of work, size of staff, budget size, and more. The information contained in this policy is based on our understanding of published sources and is provided for informational purposes only. Nothing in this communication is intended to create, or imply creation of an attorney-client relationship. This communication is not intended to be a legal opinion or formal legal advice.

INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME is committed to your safety! We are an organization that embraces and exemplifies diversity, equity and inclusion in our deeds and actions. As the COVID-19 pandemic has a disproportionate impact on communities of color, we are especially cognizant of the community impact of all the decisions we make regarding re-opening.

We have developed this document to outline our current plans for resuming operations at our office, including some changes in normal operating procedures. With these in mind, we are proposing this set of policies and practices to provide a framework for returning to the workplace in a gradual and measured manner. This plan is dynamic and will be subject to change as we monitor the situation. If there is a COVID-19 resurgence or weakening in our area, INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME may announce transitions from one phase to another as appropriate.

Summary of Phases:

Phase 1: State of emergency is in place, COVID-19 cases are not contained.

Phase 2: State of emergency is lifted, public health criteria have been met.

Phase 3: COVID-19 is contained with rigorous contact tracing and testing; state of emergency lifted for 30 days with no resurgence.

Phase 4: Effective vaccine is widespread and COVID-19 IS no longer a significant public health threat.

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| Phase 1: Remote Work for Entire Staff |
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Phase 1 began on March 16, 2020 and continues until further notice.

All staff are working remotely.

- Staff are provided laptop and other equipment needed to work from home.
- Staff may be reimbursed up to \$XX per month to cover internet, phone and utilities costs.

Limited use of office is in effect.

- All employees will refrain from coming to the office when feeling ill (fever, cough, muscle ache, headache, diarrhea, shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell or other symptoms).
- Certain staff may come to the office for limited duties such as opening mail and depositing checks, upon approval. Ideally only one staff member should be in the office suite at a time, and no more than two at any one time. Employees are asked to post in the INSERT LOCATION when they will be in the office in order to coordinate with others.
 - No employees shall enter an enclosed office that is already occupied by another staff person.
- Masks must be worn while working in the office in all common areas (hallways, kitchen, library, when utilizing copy machines, and when entering and exiting the suite). INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME will either provide masks for employees or reimburse employees for purchasing cloth masks.
- All surface areas must be kept free of papers and other materials to enable frequent cleaning.
- All surfaces should be disinfected each time a person comes to the office including: doorknobs, workspace, kitchen surfaces and appliances (refrigerator handle, microwave, coffee pot, etc.), copy machine, and any items used such as stapler, mail meter, etc.

Phase 2: Office Partially Opens for Staff

INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME may determine it is safe to partially open the office for staff when the state of emergency has been lifted and the following conditions have been met, as outlined by Johns Hopkins University and Medicine's [guidelines](#):

- (1) the number of new cases has declined for at least 14 days;
- (2) rapid diagnostic testing capacity is sufficient to test, at minimum, all people with COVID-19 symptoms, as well as close contacts and those in essential roles;
- (3) the healthcare system is able to safely care for all patients, including having appropriate personal protective equipment for healthcare workers; and
- (4) there is sufficient public health capacity to conduct contact tracing for all new cases and their close contacts.

1. Workplace safety. We need your help to ensure that our workplace is as safe as it can be.

Some of the safety measures we have planned include:

- All employees will refrain from coming to the office when feeling ill (fever, cough, muscle ache, headache, diarrhea, shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell or other symptoms) or after having been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

- Employees will be encouraged to take their temperature before arriving to the office. INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME will reimburse for the cost of purchasing a thermometer as needed.
- Cleaning and providing personal protective equipment (PPE):
 - Masks shall be worn in all common areas (hallways, kitchen, library, when utilizing copy machines, and when entering and exiting the suite). Employees will be reimbursed for the purchase of reusable cloth masks, and additional disposable masks will be provided by INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME.
 - We will work to follow the [CDC's Guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting, particularly as they pertain to shared surfaces](#).
 - Cleaning supplies to disinfect items and equipment, and hand sanitizer will be supplied by INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME.
- Establishing [physical distancing measures](#) within the workplace:
 - Required distancing of at least 6 feet between yourself and your co-workers
 - Staggered shifts and lunch/rest breaks to avoid physical contact
 - Rotation of weeks in the office and working remotely
 - In-person meetings limited to no more than 2 people, spaced at least 6 feet apart
 - Preventing employees from entering an enclosed office that is already occupied by another staff person unless the office is of sufficient size to allow for individuals to be six feet apart.
 - For individuals that traditionally work in an office that is shared with another co-worker or co-workers, arrangements shall be made to ensure that more than one person are not working within the office simultaneously.
- Restricting business travel and outside meetings:
 - Business travel (both within the state and beyond the state) is on an indefinite hold; employees are not permitted to travel to attend meetings or conferences until we have determined that it is safe to do so.
 - Meetings with individuals outside the office are not permitted.
- No handshakes, hugs or touching are permitted.
- Visitor policy:
 - There will be no visitors to the office until further notice.
 - Please use video or telephone conferencing instead of in-person client meetings.
 - We will provide contactless pickup and delivery of products, such as educational materials.

2. Return to Work. We will work with the members of our team to plan for how and when employees will return to work. All supervisors will be reaching out to their team members individually to identify and discuss any special needs and concerns.

Some of the approaches we are considering include:

- Phasing-in the return to our offices:
- Accommodating employees in [high-risk categories \(click for CDC guidance on high risk individuals\)](#), such as [allowing](#) individuals in high risk categories to work from home or remain on

leave until it is safe for them to return to work, and creating isolated workstations, providing additional PPE, or allowing fewer days in the office

- Making allowances for staff members who wish to return to the office in a partial day scenario rather than a full workday scenario

3. Remote work. As you may know, we have been offering various telecommuting options for more INSERT TIME FRAME; the practice has worked well for us. We are exploring a number of options regarding our telecommuting practices, such as:

- Continuing to allow remote work where possible to keep employees safe
- Staggering weeks in office and at home among team members, or offering part-time remote work on alternate weekdays
- Responding to employee requests to continue to work from home, including long-term arrangements
- Updating technology tools and resources to support virtual workers

4. Communications. Our goal is to keep the lines of communication open! We welcome your ideas about the topics or questions you would like to see addressed in future employee communications. Some of the topics we will be covering in staff communications and discussions include:

- Frequency of communication: continue with regular check in calls for staff, members, and volunteers
- Additional board communications to share updates on how things are going
- The importance of refraining from coming to the office when feeling ill and physical distancing in the office as ways to protect our team
- Information on new cleaning protocols at the office
- The availability of our Employee Assistance Program for staff who need support from external resources

5. Additional safety practices: We will be implementing the following additional practices to keep our team safe:

- Implementing flexible scheduling options allowing for compressed workweeks and flexible start and stop times
- Meal and rest break policies adjusted to stagger times and processes implemented to encourage physical distancing
 - Encouraging employees to physically distance in the office
 - Requesting that employees not bring in food to share with colleagues, unless shared food is provided in individually portioned commercially-packaged bags or containers
 - Encouraging staff to bring their meals from home
 - Asking that all employees wipe down the coffee pot/microwave/toaster oven/sink once they have touched such items
- Understanding that if the virus resurges and subsequent waves of the virus return, the organization may be forced back to a 100% virtual environment. When you leave the office at

the end of the day, please bring your laptop and other materials you might need to work at home the subsequent day.

6. Leave and Quarantine Policy.

- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, they must stay home for at least 14 days, and 7 days after symptoms subside. If the employee has been in the office in the prior 14 days, all employees will return to remote work for 14 days and we will order a deep cleaning of the office.
- If an employee is exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or is contacted by a contact tracer indicating they have been exposed, they must quarantine for 14 days. If the employee has been in the office in the prior 14 days, all employees will return to remote work for 14 days and we will order a deep cleaning of the office.
- If management is made aware that someone in the office has tested positive or is in quarantine, the staff will be informed that possible exposure in the workplace has occurred, without identifying the individual.
- Paid leave will be provided for employees who have tested positive for COVID-19, experience symptoms of COVID-19, and for those who are in quarantine.
- Employees who are in quarantine but not experiencing symptoms are asked to work remotely. Paid leave may be taken if needed.
- Employees who have had COVID-19, a suspected case of COVID-19, or quarantine may come back to work after they have been symptom-free for at least 7 days. They are not required to be tested prior to coming back to work.
- Paid leave will be provided for employees caring for family members.

7. Additional Policy Changes. In addition to policies addressed thus far, it will likely become necessary to make adjustments to operate safely and effectively in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. The board will be asked to review and approve additional policies (at times with limited time horizons) in this rapidly changing environment. Additional board meetings also may be required during this crisis.

8. Refreshing our Business Continuity Plan. We will be reviewing our Business Continuity Plan in light of the valuable lessons we have learned since the pandemic began. Let us know if you want to help with this project.

Phase 3: Office Fully Opens for Staff; Meetings Limited; Programs are Remote Only

In Phase 3, the state of emergency has been lifted for more than 30 days without a resurgence, and instances of COVID-19 are rare and are effectively contained through testing and contact tracing. Office operations will open up, while maintaining safety measures in Phase 2 with the following updates:

1. All staff may be in the office at once.
2. Masks are not required in the office.
3. Cleaning protocols remain in place.
4. No handshakes, hugs or touching.

5. Meetings are limited to 10 people using 1st floor meeting rooms, physical distancing requirements. Blue Crab conference room limited to 2 people.
6. Outside meetings are permitted if fewer than 10 people, masks are worn, and physical distancing will be in place. Employees must ask meeting hosts if these conditions will be met prior to attending the meeting.
7. Business travel by air or train are not permitted.
8. Visitors to the office are permitted according to the meeting policy above.
9. Liberal remote work continues.
10. Leave and quarantine policy remains in place.

Phase 4: Office Open; In-Person Programs Resume

In Phase 4, there are very few or zero COVID-19 cases in the community, an effective vaccine has been deployed, population level immunity is achieved, or COVID-19 is no longer a significant public health threat.

1. Mask and physical distancing are no longer required.
2. No handshakes, hugs or touching.
3. Regular in-person programming resumes such as workshops, conferences.
4. Business travel permitted.
5. Remote work policy is limited to approximately 1 day per week or as approved by supervisors.
6. Office cleaning protocols remain.
7. All employees will be encouraged to talk with their doctor about being vaccinated, and paid time off will be provided to do so. INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME will not inquire about nor disclose vaccination status of employees.