

The Transition Back to the Office

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As restrictions due to COVID-19 are slowly lifted, many businesses that have been, either, shut down or had their employees work remotely, are thinking of when and how to re-open and bring their workforce back safely. One of the biggest challenges facing business owners making this type of decision, is how does one manage this new, challenging and invisible risk (risk of COVID transmission), while ensuring your team's productivity remains high.

In order for an organization to reopen safely and successfully, its leadership must work together to develop and implement a comprehensive "return to work" plan that takes into consideration all possible risk scenarios.

OSHA mandates that all employers must provide their employees with an environment that is free of hazards. This can be somewhat easily achieved by providing staff with safety training, enforcing safety rules and monitoring employee performance. We've addressed that in our [recent blog on safety](#). The



question facing business owners who operate during this “new normal” is how does one deal with risk that is invisible and very real?

We have faced and had to address the same challenges as we plan our September 14th return to the office after working remotely for the last six (6) months.

Here are just a few things The ALS Group leadership has implemented to ensure the health and safety of our team:

- Hand sanitizer dispensers placed at the entrance of the office;
- Staggered work schedules to minimized the number of associates in the office;
- Continuing to provide work-at-home accommodations for staff members who request this;
- Ensuring social distancing by limiting chairs in a conference room and spacing out work stations as necessary (Floor stickers is a fun, non-intrusive way to remind people to keep a safe (6 feet) distance);
- Providing clear separations of work stations by creating functional cubicles; (We were fortunate enough to have had these already built out in our open work space)
- Substituting re-usable kitchen plates, cups and utensils with disposable ones;
- Providing masks and social distancing bracelets to staff in order to let them easily identify how their peers feel with in person contact (no comments necessary!);
- Talking to the team and see what they prefer as they transition back to the office (how many days a week? What is the timing that works for them)?
- Having associates complete health questionnaires prior to their return to the office after working from home or travelling.
- Allowing staff members to stay home if they are sick.

These are just some, but definitely not all of the steps a business owner can take in order to provide their workforce with a safe work environment.

Remember, communication is key, discuss the changes and new expectations with your staff and listen to their concerns so you can set up your team and business for success in this new environment.

For more information on returning to work or any other risk related issue please contact Albert Sica, Managing Principal, at 732.395.4251 or asica@thealsgroup.com.

Topics: [Human Capital Risk](#), [The ALS Group](#), [pandemics](#), [COVID-19](#), [work from home](#), [how to have a safe workplace](#), [back to work](#)