



COVID-19 eBook

Back to Work

Updated: July 2, 2020



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Back to Work

Introduction

As we look to relaxing restrictions and restarting the economy, there's much to think about before we open our doors. You have to consider: workplace safety for employees and guests; how to maintain social distance and still provide a conducive business atmosphere; what the financial impact is to the business; and how are you going to operate in a new world of work.

We realize every business is unique; however, we wanted to put together this eBook as a general way to help you through the decision-making process by providing resources based on state and federal best practices, guidelines, and safety protocols. We hope you will find this to be a valuable resource as you begin to reopen your doors.

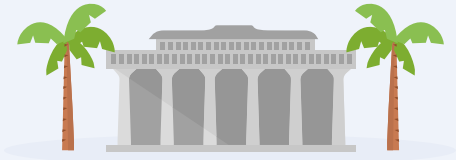
As with any business decision you need to make, you need to do what's specifically appropriate for you and your business. We highly encourage you seek guidance and advice from your trusted advisors as they know you and your business best.



When to Reopen?

Determining the best time to reopen is a decision only you can make. However, consider the following:

State and Local Government Guidance



Review state and county rules. Understand that even within the State of Hawaii, City and County guidance may impact your business, and more restrictive measures may be in place.

- [State of Hawaii - Emergency Proclamations](#)
- [City and County of Honolulu COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [County of Hawaii](#)
- [County of Maui](#)
- [County of Kauai](#)

Identify the Risk



Keep in mind, the pandemic is NOT over. The risk of COVID-19 has not been eliminated, so you need to consider the threat of exposure between anyone that enters the workplace:

- Your employees
- Your guests/customers
- Your vendors and other third-parties

We encourage you to conduct a risk assessment by following the guidelines within this eBook. In addition, consider further guidance from the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), [Department of Health](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), and industry associations.

Questions?

Feel free to contact our team at: (808) 791-4900

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Assessing Risk

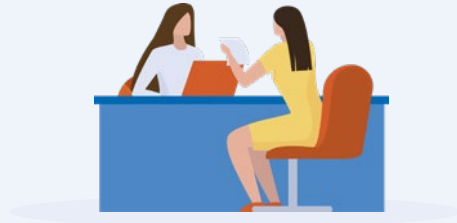
Understanding your company's risk is integral to reopening and should be understood before you open your doors. Each industry and the businesses within it are unique, so it may involve different levels of risk mitigation. However, a typical risk assessment will involve:

Identifying Potential Hazards



Ask yourself, "Where would the potential exposure areas be if an infected person came through the door?" Review high traffic areas, entry points, high touch areas (doorknobs, keypads, copy machines, faucets, microwaves, etc.), and employee functions.

Identifying What Positions May Be High Risk



Once potential hazards have been identified, consider the staff in positions who meet with customers, business partners, clients, and any employees who may be at a higher risk because they're immunocompromised (or other factors).

Conducting a thorough risk assessment allows you to better control your risks and lessens your exposure. For guidance, consider the following resources: [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA), [Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), and industry associations.

Questions?

Feel free to contact our Risk Management Team at: (808) 791-4900

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Maintaining a Safe Work Environment

With a completed risk assessment, you now need to have the proper controls in place to move forward and maintain a safe work environment.

You may want to consider the following recommendations from the CDC and OSHA:



Consider flexible work schedules to mitigate exposure, such as shifts or telecommuting. This may be the time to implement a more robust remote work policy that includes what you've learned over the past weeks. For your scheduling convenience, HR Symphony® has an easy-to-use [scheduling feature](#) to help simplify the process should you consider a flexible work schedule.



Consider how to create a more conducive physical environment. For example, you could consider eliminating the use of common spaces like breakrooms and kitchens or limiting the maximum number of people who can be in a common space at one time. Conference and meeting rooms will also need to be a consideration. How will you conduct staff meetings or client meetings? Do you have the space to maintain social distancing and still meet face-to-face?



Mandate sick employees to stay at home. Have a response plan should an employee report to work sick, have a sick family member, or inform you of their possible exposure to someone with COVID-19. Front-line managers should be trained on internal protocols.



If mandated, provide your staff with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and up-to-date training for proper use.



Require frequent and thorough hand washing or hand sanitizing (must be alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 70% alcohol) for employees, customers, and visitors.



Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.



Initiate and maintain a cleaning regimen for common and individual areas, as well as shared equipment. This will be key to a successful reopening of your business. If feasible, a professional cleaning firm could perform deep cleaning of the entire facility. Having extra hand sanitizer, Lysol/Clorox wipes, and cleaning materials on hand may prove to be very useful, and if you are serving the public (e.g., customer service desks), installing a sneeze guard could offer a higher level of protection.

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Recalling Employees

Now that you have considered your actual workspace and potential risks involved, it's time to think about your employees. How will you bring them back? Did you lay off or furlough employees during this time? If so, then we need to discuss how to recall your employees. Things to consider include:



Providing a phased approach to returning to work

- Determine the essential positions that must return first, then phase-in each additional group as needed. Use objective, nondiscriminatory factors to select who comes in. Keep in mind if you received a PPP Loan, this would influence your return to work approach. To learn more about the PPP Loan click [here](#).
- Define changes to the schedule in order to provide the greatest protection to workers.
- Communicate with employees regarding their return to work.

Creating a plan for [high-risk category](#) employees

- Consider allowing them to work from home or remain on leave until they feel more comfortable to return.
- Determine increased safety measures to help protect them when working onsite, including isolated workstations, additional PPE as requested, fewer days in the office, etc.

Addressing employees who are unable/unwilling to return to work

- Employees who are fearful of returning to work
- Employees who have family obligations that interfere with their ability to return to work
- Employees who remain under quarantine due to exposure to COVID-19 (or travel)
- Assess if an employee's situation is protected under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA), and if so, the type(s) of reasonable accommodation that may be offered.

Evaluating and updating policies that may have changed due to impact of COVID-19

- Update your remote work policies (if applicable).
- Update your leave of absence policy to account for extended illness due to a pandemic.
- Update safety and benefit policies.

Questions?

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Screening Employees

Some employers are considering screening measures to help support a safe work environment. The [EEOC](#) has issued updated guidance on this topic, and recommends that employers follow the guidelines of CDC and state/local public health authorities as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves:

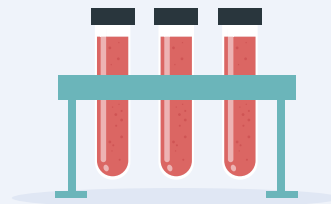
- Employers may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus.
- Employers may take employee temperatures, as this is a direct symptom of the COVID-19 virus.
- Employers may require an employee to stay home or go home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Employers may require a doctor's note to show fitness for duty. However, during this pandemic an employee may need to seek clearance from a local clinic to provide return to work certification.
- An employer may administer a COVID-19 test before permitting employees into the workplace; however, this step should only be taken if job-related and consistent with business necessity. Employers should seek additional guidance from the [CDC](#) on testing.



Any employee screening should be done individually, in a private area, immediately inside the facility entrance or outside under a tent. All information collected during the screening should be maintained confidentially.

Should you want to consider offering IgG/IgM (antibody) tests to employees on a voluntary basis, they can be provided by the following:

- [Clinical Labs of Hawaii](#)
- [Adventist Health Castle](#)
- [Minit Medical \(Maui\)](#)
- Or through a primary care physician



If an antibody test returns a positive result, then the employee should be asked to submit to an RT-PCR diagnostic test, in order to rule out active COVID-19. On June 17, 2020, EEOC issued guidance that prohibited, under the ADA, employers from requiring antibody testing before allowing employees to re-enter the workplace. [Click here](#) for the EEOC guidance.

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Planning Communication

Establishing a clear communication plan will allow employees, clients, customers, and vendors to understand how the organization plans to reopen or reestablish business processes.

Topics to cover may include:

- How staying home if sick and physical distancing policies are being used to protect workers and customers
- Detail what training on new workplace safety and disinfection protocols have been implemented
- Have exposure-response communications ready to go to any affected employees and customers



Have media communications ready to release on topics such as return-to-work timetables, safety protections in place, and other ways that the company is supporting workers and customers. Prepare to respond to the media for workplace exposures.

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From the Remote Desk of Barron Guss

To our clients and members of our business community,

It's been nearly three months since COVID-19 changed the physiological, psychological, and financial landscape of the world almost overnight.

The constant flow and volume of information regarding this crisis continues to be overwhelming and difficult for all of us to understand. We have done our best to simplify and explain all the information found in this guide, and I hope that you find our expertise useful and insightful.

For the last 50 years, we have taken to heart our responsibility to not only serve, but to make a difference to our clients and our community, and while tomorrow's business landscape may look and feel different, our commitment will remain the same; to be with you today, tomorrow and the next 50 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Barron L. Guss".

Barron L. Guss
President and CEO

About Us

simplicityHR by ALTRES serves as the human resources "back office" for more than 2,200 local businesses. We provide expert payroll processing, HR administration, workers' compensation coverage and claims management, health care plans and exceptional employee benefits packages, as well as training for managers and staff.



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