

WORC

Return-to-Office Playbook

A People-First Guide for
International Workplace Operators

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Introduction

As workplace operators, we manage office environments for millions of people in nearly every country across the globe. We serve individuals, small businesses, and many of the world's largest companies with solutions that range from open floor plan coworking to large, customized suites.

While our specific approaches, members, locations, and physical spaces vary, we're now focused on answering the same question: **how to best protect the health and safety of the staff, members, visitors, and anyone else who enters our workspaces.**

Of course, there's no simple answer. The scientific understanding of COVID-19, while evolving quickly, is still nascent, and we operate in diverse geographies that are all being impacted in different ways. So, rather than try to tell you exactly what to do, this document is intended to help you make informed decisions and develop a return-to-office plan that places people first.

First, we'll lay out a set of operating principles and considerations to help guide your prioritization and decision-making. Next, we'll present the health and safety pillars that are fundamental to returning to the office and the detailed decision points you'll need to think through. Then, we'll walk through

potential changes for some of the most common space types as well as the new practices and procedures you may decide to implement, all while sharing examples from operators around the world. Finally, we'll review key questions about when to reopen or close your space. ■

Overview

No matter where your business is based, one thing is clear: Shared workplaces are going to look and operate quite differently than they did before the COVID-19 pandemic, at least until we have effective therapeutics or a vaccine.

Returning to the office safely is a major undertaking that impacts nearly every aspect of your workspaces, from design and facilities to services, staffing, and communications. There are important physical and operational changes that must be made before reopening, but there's no silver bullet.

Success will be determined by the quality of implementation and execution over a sustained period of time. It will require an approach that not only *keeps* people safe, but that also makes people *feel* safe by building their trust and confidence. And while there is much that we can control directly within our walls, it's important to remember that members are both different as individuals (with different commutes, health risk levels, anxieties, family situations, etc.) and as employees of diverse companies (with unique corporate programs, policies, protocols, etc.).

As an industry whose strength is in meeting varied workplace needs at scale, we're well positioned to rise to this new challenge. By leveraging our collective expertise, we can protect the livelihoods of millions and take the lead in demonstrating what successful, safe workplace operations look like. ■

Operating Principles

Before figuring out the details of your return-to-office plan, it's important to establish a set of operating principles that can help you determine your priorities and make decisions. While you may already have operating principles, these should be revisited — even if only temporarily — within the context of the current environment and the need to *keep people safe* and *make them feel safe*. At WORC, we are aligned around the principles below, although we encourage you to make your own.

Make health your first priority.

Now more than ever, running a successful business depends on safeguarding the health and well-being of your employees and members.

Think through the worst case.

There's a lot going on, but take the time to think about what else could go wrong in the future and make a contingency plan.

Be transparent, even when it feels uncomfortable.

Empower your members to make informed decisions by openly communicating the best information you have.

Guide towards desired behaviors.

Help your members feel confident in your space by actively celebrating positive behaviors and discouraging negative ones.

Know what you need to know.

Write down your plan's most important assumptions, how you'll test them, and a roadmap for how to adapt your plan over time as you learn more.

Meet people where they are.

Assume that people act with positive intent and acknowledge the unique anxieties of the current moment.

Health and Safety Pillars

Safely operating in this new context will require a series of interconnected changes that will impact your physical design, services, policies, staffing practices, and more. After consulting public health experts, we've created five pillars for maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. It's also important that you continue to reference public health guidance to stay current on changes and recommendations.

Access and Tracing:

Reduce transmission with new policies around workplace access, visitor screening, and contact tracing.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

Minimize the number of surfaces that multiple people touch and relentlessly disinfecting those they do.

Physical Distancing:

Replan the workplace to make appropriate physical distancing easy.

Services:

Revise community and individual offerings to ensure health and safety.

Behavioral Changes and Accountability:

Build, share, and reinforce the new norms required for successfully implementing your return-to-office plan.

Decision Points

Within each of our five health and safety pillars, operators face various decisions that must be made to form the backbone of your return-to-office plan. Each decision will need to be considered within the context of the specific space types within your workplace (e.g. cafés, common areas, meeting rooms, or private offices).

Access and Tracing:

- Opening and closing thresholds, indicators, and phases
- Decision tree and protocols for COVID-19 cases
- Visitor access
- Entry doors
- Deliveries
- Screening and testing
- Registration and contact tracing

Cleaning and Disinfection:

- Cleaning and disinfection scope and frequency
- Sanitization stations and cleaning supplies
- Absorbent surfaces
- Dividers and shields
- Setups and supplies for cafés, meeting rooms, and other common spaces
- Touchless solutions (e.g. door openers or appliances)
- HVAC and air purification

Physical Distancing:

- Building entrance, exit, lobby, check-in, and elevators
- Spatial density and configuration
- Circulation
- Occupancy monitoring

Services:

- Food and beverage services
- Events
- Printing
- Mail, package, and delivery services
- Membership options

Behavioral Changes and Accountability:

- Face masks and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Community policies/terms of use
- Member communication, education, and buy-in
- Member and guests policy sign-off
- Member feedback process
- Staff communication, education, and buy-in
- Staff roles, responsibilities, and success metrics
- Staff review or audit scope and frequency
- Staff training and continuity planning
- Signage and communications

Building Lobbies and Elevators

Members' potential exposure to COVID-19 doesn't start at the office, but the moment they leave their front door. Mundane activities such as commuting, parking, entering the building, or using the elevators now present a potential risk. It's important that we consider the major touchpoints that members face as they make their way to the building and to the workplace.

Ask Yourself:

- How will your members adjust their commute? Will those changes require additional parking, bicycle storage, or other accommodations?
- What are your landlord's policies for common areas, amenities, and elevators? Are they consistent with your own? How will they impact your members?
- What capital or operational adjustments will your landlord be making? How will you break down the responsibilities for cleaning, screening, testing, securing PPE, etc.?

Consider:

Communicating your expectations and policies to your landlord: Create an open dialogue with your landlord early on. Share your policies, expectations, and requests regarding access, screening, distancing, sanitization, and air quality/ventilation for the lobby, elevators, and other common areas as well as communications for key triggers.

Partnering with your landlord to offer additional services: If gaps exist between your landlord's plan and your own, consider how to fill them together — without duplicating efforts. For example, work with your landlord to solve for temperature checking or bicycle storage needs.

Allowing members to use other locations to minimize their commute:

Consider adapting your membership policies to enable members to work safely from locations that may be closer to their home.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Asia** and **Australia**, workplace operator **JustCo** has focused on having an open dialogue with all of its landlords to ensure building-level compliance with government direction. In some markets, building entrants must share their personal information via a safe entry system in order to enable contact tracing, allow for distancing, and reduce physical interaction. In Singapore for example, JustCo is working closely with the building management of its locations to ensure that temperature screening is conducted for visitors before they enter the building. As an additional precaution, they have also placed 'Contactless Thermometers' at their reception and are requiring entrants to fill out a health declaration prior to entering.



In **India**, workplace operator **Awfis** worked with its landlord to create a roadmap for meeting new norms and requirements around COVID-19. This included performing maintenance and upgrading HVAC systems, making elevator controls touchless, enhancing visitor and security protocols, creating an evacuation plan, and putting contact tracing procedures in place.

Workplace Entryways and Reception Areas

As soon as members and others enter your workspace, you become the primary party responsible for managing the behaviors, policies, and practices that may impact their health and safety.

Ask Yourself:

- Who will you let into your space? What entry points will they use and how will you control their access to the space?
- Will you require screening or testing to enter?
- Will you require face masks or other forms of PPE to enter?
- How will members, visitors, vendors, and others be registered to allow for contact tracing?
- How will you protect the safety of all parties during the entrance and check-in process?
- Will you require entrants to give their consent to new norms and policies?
- How will deliveries be handled?

Consider:

Updating entrances, mask requirements, handcleaning, and registration:

Close secondary entrances in order to better control the flow of traffic and consider adding touchless entry solutions. Place sanitization stations on either side of the main doors (and elevators) and request that people use them before coming in. Upon entering, require all parties to register and to wear a mask in common areas (have face masks available but encourage members and visitors to bring their own). Create a distanced registration queue with signage and floor decals to indicate proper spacing. If possible, register entrants in a way that avoids direct person-to-person contact, such as with a mobile app. Consider placing restrictions against bringing in non-essential items. Post clear signage and provide instructions on your policies and the direction of travel.

Requiring a commitment to behavioral norms and policies from all entrants:

Make signing and upholding your health-and-safety policies mandatory for everyone who enters.

Actively monitoring occupancy levels: Use manual or automated means to track density within your space. If occupancy exceeds the maximum recommended or mandated by health authorities or an internal benchmark, institute new requirements to limit access to your spaces by establishing rotating or staggered schedules for members and staff.

Requiring self-administered at-home screening: Create or use an existing service to administer at-home self-checks. In this approach, members respond to a health questionnaire and/or check themselves for symptoms, such as a raised temperature or lowered oxygen levels before coming to the office.

Requiring in-person screening: Have anyone entering your space complete a health questionnaire and/or check for symptoms, such as a raised temperature or lowered oxygen levels. Consider using oral thermometers, infrared digital thermometers, or other devices. Do not allow people to enter if their temperature is above the government's recommended level or if they issue a positive response to one of the items on your health questionnaire.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **Convene** partnered with Eden Health to support its preemptive screening and temperature checking efforts. Before arriving at a Convene location, employees and members use an app to complete a short self-screen with a self-administered temperature check — confirmed by uploading a photo of the reading — and a yes/no questionnaire. Anyone who responds yes or records a raised temperature will be connected virtually to a clinical associate. If that person is cleared for entry, a unique visual cue will be displayed to building and Convene staff upon his or her arrival. In addition, Convene will conduct in-person temperature checks via a touch-free scan in building lobbies or at the entrance to their spaces.



In **Canada**, workplace operator **iQ Offices** has implemented a touchless check-in process facilitated by location staff. Screenings involve answering a pre-set list of safety questions and non-invasive temperature scan. Those who pass are provided with a new wristband each day which lets them and other members in iQ Offices' spaces know that they have been cleared. To enter a space after hours, members must complete a digital self-assessment.

Common Areas

Lounges, libraries, and other shared spaces provide members with diverse places for working, events, informal meetings, and other activities. In the COVID-19 era, these spaces should be considered high risk and their use will need to be modified and monitored carefully.

Ask Yourself:

- Should your common areas remain open?
Under what conditions?
- Should you continue to allow coworkers without private offices in these areas?
- How do you solve for distancing and disinfection in these spaces?
- Should furniture, fixtures, and equipment be modified or removed?

Consider:

Modifying common area usage and configuration, and requiring face masks:

Do not allow in-person events. Remove chairs and other furniture to promote distancing. Remove decorative and absorbent fixtures and surfaces that may encourage touching by members, such as books, games, blankets, and pillows and consider restricting the use of non-essential personal objects. Install touchless trash cans and other contactless options. Maintain table top surfaces for grab-and-go food and beverages. Add clear directional signage to establish one-way traffic and require that face masks are worn in these spaces.

Enhancing cleaning and disinfection, air quality, and ventilation: Update your cleaning protocols, focusing on regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces. Add sanitization stations, to encourage good hygiene, and visual cues, such as “Just Cleaned” cards and timetables so that members know when surfaces have been sanitized. Adjust HVAC to increase fresh air intake, after-hours humidity, and filtration. Consider installing an additional air purification system.

Relocating hot desk/coworking members from common areas: If possible, move members who work from common areas to dedicated or shared private offices. If not possible, ensure that members are staggered and maintain appropriate distancing.

Closing or architecturally modifying common areas: Construct physical dividers (while ensuring appropriate air flow and filtration) or restrict access to members using any one-way walkways in common areas that are required to move from one side of your space to another.

Common Areas

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Asia** and **Australia**, workplace operator **JustCo** has implemented distancing solutions in all of its common areas — including waiting lounges, nooks, and hotdesks — by adjusting layouts, removing furniture, and cleaning more frequently. The company is evaluating UV disinfection robots to deploy in its larger locations. Members are provided with face masks, and are strongly encouraged to wear them at all times.



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **CIC** has moved to create touchless facilities, with the goal that no touching of common surfaces will be required to use an office, regardless of a person's abilities. Among other changes, doors will be openable by foot or wave, and CIC has ordered pocketable, self-disinfecting devices that allow you to pull a handle or push a button without touching it directly. Sanitization stations will be added, as well as nano-septic antimicrobial film to cover certain surfaces, such as door handles.

Preparing Spaces by Type

Kitchens and Cafés

For many workplace operators, kitchens and cafés have historically been primary gathering places for members, and therefore present a risk for the transmission of COVID-19. Enhancing safety will require workplace operators to change how these spaces are used, as well as supplies, appliances, and food and beverage offerings.

Ask Yourself:

- Should your kitchen or café remain open?
Under what conditions and with what level of density?
- Should you continue to offer food and beverage?
Are there alternative ways to provide those services without members entering a common space or touching surfaces?
- How do you solve for disinfection in the kitchen or café?
- Should supplies or appliances be removed or replaced?

Consider:

Modifying kitchen or café use and cleaning and disinfecting protocols:

Limit occupancy to one or two people in the kitchen or café at a time. You can enforce a distanced queue with clear signage for those waiting, and require hand washing immediately upon entering and exiting the kitchen or café. Disinfect all high-touch surfaces multiple times throughout the day. Require face masks to be worn in these areas.

Revisiting your events, food-and-beverage program, supplies, and appliances:

Only offer individually-packaged food & beverage items and supplies and do not allow any group events. Replace reusable dishware, flatware and other kitchen supplies with single-use items and require that staff wear gloves at all times in the kitchen or café. Consider replacing appliances and other items — such as trash cans — with touchless options. Where touch is required, place self-serve disinfecting wipes nearby for members to use and sanitize surfaces such as buttons and handles regularly throughout the day. Designate, clearly mark, and appropriately distance areas for food delivery and pickup outside your space, if possible. Consider installing HEPA air filtration devices within the kitchen or café.

Providing food and beverage services in members' offices: Offer food and beverage delivery directly to members' offices or workstations. Staff should wear face masks and gloves while providing contactless drop-off. Consider partnering with local food delivery services to supplement lunches that members would typically bring in and prepare themselves. Ensure the registration of the delivery person to enable contact tracing.

Closing kitchens or cafés: Restrict their use to hand washing only.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Australia**, workplace operator **Hub Australia** has cafés at each of their locations that normally sells coffee, tea, cold drinks, and food. They have since updated their offerings for an initial period of two months to pre-packaged takeaway drinks. Communal seating has been reduced to enable appropriate physical distancing per government guidelines while cleaning has been increased and made more visible, changes which are expected to continue even after restrictions are eased.



In **India**, workplace operator **Awfis** created a standard operating procedure to meet all national guidelines. Among other changes, floor markers were added in the café, water vending points were increased (and members provided with their own bottles), and staffing was expanded in order to sanitize shared surfaces and machines every 30 minutes.

Conference Rooms and Phone Booths

Shared workplaces often feature a variety of common productivity and amenity spaces that are available to members. While ultimately the usage of these spaces will depend on a location's overall occupancy patterns, we expect meeting and phone booths to be used more frequently because of the increased adoption of video conferencing and social distancing requirements more broadly.

Ask Yourself:

- Should your conference or meeting rooms and phone booths remain open? Under what conditions?
- How do you solve for distancing and disinfection within these spaces?
- Will furniture, supplies, or A/V equipment need to be adjusted?
- What information should be collected to support contact tracing?

Consider:

Modifying usage and configuration, and requiring face masks: Remove approximately 50 percent of the chairs in meeting and conference rooms and provide visual cues to support distancing and one-way paths. Remove decorative fixtures, tools, and accessories (e.g., whiteboard markers or post-it notes) and provide these sanitized tools on an as-needed basis. Add A/V equipment to meeting rooms that do not currently have it, while considering options that minimize contact. You may also want to add entry solutions that avoid direct contact, such as foot pulls. Require face masks to be worn in these spaces as with in other common areas.

Enhancing cleaning, visual reminders, and member expectations: Consider cleaning these rooms after every meeting or at least every one to two hours on a staggered schedule and allowing members to select conference rooms that have just been cleaned. You can provide them with a cleaning timetable. Create a sanitization station within each room and require members to wipe down high-touch surfaces and equipment before and after meetings. Adjust HVAC to increase fresh air intake, after-hours humidity, and filtration.

Requiring reservations for all communal spaces: In order to enable contact tracing and communicate PPE and behavioral protocols in advance, require bookings with contact information for anyone using a communal space, even smaller areas such as phone booths. Update your meeting room descriptions to reflect your revised maximum room capacities (for example, "this eight-person room is currently limited to four people") and lock shared spaces to prevent members from dropping in without registering.

Closing meeting and conference rooms, phone booths, and other similar spaces: If you're taking a phased approach to reopening, consider closing these areas entirely at first.

Using smaller meeting rooms and phone booths to enforce physical distancing: Provide visual cues to ensure smaller meeting rooms and phone booths are used by single occupants only. Private spaces for phone calls and video conferencing can help enforce physical distancing better than taking virtual meetings in open, shared spaces.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **multiple countries**, workplace operator **IWG** established a meeting room safety protocol in accordance with health and safety guidelines. Eating is spaced out to allow for physical distancing. People are asked to move around in a clockwise direction to avoid chokepoints and maintain a safe distance for catering. Signage throughout the meeting rooms informs occupants of these policies.



In **Asia** and **Australia**, workplace operator **JustCo** revised its spatial guidelines within meeting rooms to reduce overall their occupancy. New capacity is communicated through signage and messaging at the entrance to each room. Community managers are conducting regular spot checks and high-touch surfaces are wiped down after every use. Rooms are locked and accessed by contact card, and must be booked on a mobile app beforehand.

Corridors, Mailrooms, and Printer Stations

Circulation areas and other highly-trafficked space types, such as mail rooms and printing stations, require attention because they present potential choke points that could create risks for members.

Ask Yourself:

- Should mailrooms and printer stations remain open? Under what conditions?
- Should you make modifications to printing and mail services?
- Should you implement one-way paths in corridors and stairways? If so, how can you best enforce them?
- How should you ensure sufficient disinfection of high-touch surfaces such as printers?

Consider:

Implementing one-way walking paths in all corridors and stairways:

Add wayfinding signage in spaces such as lobbies and hallways to direct one-way traffic. People should move in a clockwise pattern and all offices should have a clear pathway to restrooms and exits. Require that face masks are worn in these areas.

De-densifying mail and printer rooms: Add occupancy limits, signage, and sanitization stations in mail and printer rooms and require that face masks are worn in them. If the amount of packages makes it impossible for members to retrieve their mail without moving other boxes, deliver packages to members' private offices instead.

Implementing contactless printing and delivery: Establish new procedures for deliveries, including setting up drop off points outside your space, sanitizing objects and wearing PPE. If possible, do not allow delivery members inside your space. Enable contactless printing services and deliver print jobs to members' offices. In both cases, staff should wear gloves and PPE when handling members' items. Remove shared amenities that members would typically use when printing or receiving packages, such as scissors, staplers, or tape. Provide members with a personal version of these items or offer them to members on-demand so that they can be sanitized after each use.

Corridors, Mailrooms, and Printer Stations

Workplace Operator Spotlight

THE GREAT ROOM

In **Asia**, workplace operator **The Great Room** instituted a new mail and package delivery procedure. Now, all deliveries are sanitized by staff and, in an effort to promote contactless handling, are brought to members via a trolley for collection.



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **MakeOffices** instituted a one-way flow of traffic for all of its corridors. It also added social distancing signage and six foot indicators around print stations and mail rooms, among other areas. Printers will have their functionality adjusted to auto-release prints and copies to reduce contact, and self-use sanitization stations will be added to print areas as an extra precaution.

Preparing Spaces by Type

Private Offices

In most shared workplaces, the majority of member companies have their own enclosed, lockable private office for teams of all sizes. While workplace operators often actively manage common areas, meeting rooms, and other shared spaces or amenities, they less frequently provide in-office services beyond a standard cleaning scope. Moving forward, members are expected to spend more of their time within their enclosed offices, which will create new challenges and opportunities.

Ask Yourself:

- Should it be required or recommended that members adhere to distancing recommendations, use PPE, or comply with other health-and-safety policies in their private offices?
- How can you help members be safe in their private offices?
- How should cleaning or air quality/HVAC be adjusted?

Consider:

Enhancing cleaning, air quality, and ventilation: Update your janitorial scope to ensure that door knobs, lightswitches, and desk surfaces are disinfected for occupied offices, if members desire. Adjust HVAC settings to increase fresh air intake and after-hours humidity. Add HEPA filtration to minimize the chances of airborne transmission.

Helping members create a safe workplace: Provide recommendations, resources, and tools to members, and encourage them to use face masks within their offices. Consider providing a supply kit or specific items such as physical desk dividers for free or an additional charge. Support members in rearranging desk layouts to enable appropriate distancing by, for example, providing them with measuring tapes or revised floorplans; limiting occupancy to every other seat; and implementing flexible working hours or rotating schedules.

Providing new services and membership options: Consider new membership options that support safety, such as day passes, area-level access, virtual memberships, and private meeting spaces. Make new services available, such as deep- or medical-grade cleanings with electrostatic mist (charged particles which can help with sanitizing a surface), contactless printing, or food and mail delivery.

Requiring members to adhere to health authority guidance in their offices:

Mandate that members use face masks and comply with distancing recommendations and other health guidelines within their offices. This may require providing supplementary office space for free or at additional cost.

Private Offices

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Australia**, workplace operator **Hub Australia** designated a maximum number of people for private offices in line with physical distancing requirements and added educational signage. If full teams cannot be accommodated under these occupancy limits, additional space is provided at no charge. The frequency of cleanings has been increased and additional cleaning services, as well as space divider screens, are available for purchase. HVAC maintenance and filter cleaning has also been increased.



In **Europe**, workplace operator **Mindspace** has suggested that all members work within private, enclosed offices. If members like, they can contact their Community Manager, who will provide a partition designed to prevent person-to-person contamination free of charge. Members are asked to wear masks, which will be made available to members at cost.



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **MakeOffices** created a new resource and product catalog to help members modify their offices as needed based on their return to work schedule and office occupancy. Through the product catalog, members can order desk dividers, six foot radius decals, UV disinfection tools, and desk mats, as well as other equipment and PPE items.

Restrooms

Restrooms require particular attention as you consider your reopening plan. While scientific understanding is still evolving, it's believed that COVID-19 can become aerosolized when using the facilities.

Ask Yourself:

- How should restroom access be adjusted or restricted?
- How can you maintain cleanliness and disinfection in restrooms?
- How can you minimize contact?

Consider:

Enhancing cleanings, air quality, and ventilation: Update your janitorial scope to revise the extent and frequency of cleanings. Adjust HVAC settings to increase fresh air intake and after-hours humidity, and add HEPA filtration to minimize the chances of airborne transmission. Consider adding toilet seat covers and requiring that face masks are worn, as in other shared spaces.

Minimizing contact: Enable touchless entry and exit via door pulls or other solutions that avoid direct contact. Or, add tissue and trash receptacles to either side of the door. Consider removing or covering hand dryers and making towel dispensers, toilets, other items automatic. Remove any shared items such as mouthwashes or sprays.

Restricting density and communicating guidelines: Limit restrooms based on their size. For example, close every other sink or urinal. Include usage signs inside and outside the facilities.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Vigorously cleaning and disinfecting the office is a critical part of operating in the COVID-19 era. That includes installing sanitization stations, enhancing the scope and frequency of your own (or third-party) cleanings, equipping your members to help maintain cleanliness, and encouraging good hygiene.

Ask Yourself:

- How should daytime and evening cleaning scopes be adjusted?
- How should daytime and evening cleaning frequencies be adjusted?
- What type of cleaning should you conduct before reopening your locations? What about if there is a confirmed or presumed case in one of your locations?
- Where should sanitization stations be placed? What other supplies should you provide?

Consider:

Encouraging good hygiene with signage, sanitization stations, and supplies:

Provide and thoughtfully place stocked sanitization stations throughout your location and make cleaning supplies available to members. Sanitization stations should be contactless and include disposable gloves, sanitizing wipes (or spray with power towels), and hand sanitizer that is at least 60 percent alcohol. Add signage throughout your spaces to provide instructions and encourage or require cleaning, handwashing, or hand sanitization. Sanitization stations may be placed in: common areas, meeting rooms, telephone rooms, printer stations, wellness rooms, cafés, on both sides of entrances and exits, on both sides of restrooms, and other areas.

Enhancing cleaning scope, training, and frequency and adding further options:

Increase daytime scope to clean high-touch areas (particularly shared spaces) and surfaces regularly throughout the day, including common handrails, door knobs, handles, elevator buttons, countertops, sinks, café tables and chairs, appliances, front desks, light switches, and phones. Ensure that all staff are trained on the contents, risks, and proper use of cleaning supplies and equipment. Run dishwashers on sanitization cycles — although reusable items are discouraged. Enhance nightly scope to include the above, as well as other high-touch surfaces, desktops, door handles, stairwells, and glass within private offices, if desired by members. Consider providing additional options to members, including in-office cleaning, air purifiers, and UV sterilizer lights, as well as the use of electrostatic sprayers.

Increasing the visibility of cleaning via frequent staff rotations and visual cues:

Encourage staff to make cleaning efforts more visible and add cues, such as signage timers or cards, to common areas, meeting rooms, cafés, phone booths, and other spaces to indicate the timing of the last cleaning.

Conducting a deep- or medical-grade disinfection in the case of a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case:

If someone with a confirmed or presumed case has entered a location within 14 days, conduct a deep- or medical-grade cleaning immediately. Do not reopen until that clean has been completed. Ensure that only trained and certified cleaning crews undertake advanced disinfection procedures.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Europe**, workplace operator **Fora** is adding dedicated staff to their regular housekeeping team to ensure that its new and enhanced cleaning protocols are maintained at all times and that each floor is inspected on an hourly basis during the day. In addition, a thorough cleaning will be performed each evening, new antiviral cleaning solutions will be used, and staff will receive additional training on high-touch surface sanitization (including items such as jars, bottles, and chairs).



In the **U.S.**, meetings and workplace operator **Convene** has initiated an Enhanced Cleaning Service Program that increases the frequency of cleanings and adds numerous elements. In addition to placing cleaning stations and sanitizing supplies throughout its locations, Convene will move to hourly cleanings of its common areas, meeting rooms, and restrooms. On a weekly basis, Convene will perform deep cleanings of these areas as well as electrostatic mistings of furniture. Single-use placemats will be provided for WorkSuites, every other desk will be labeled as Available for use, and upholstered furniture will be disinfected weekly.

Communications and Signage

During this period of time, communications play an outsized role in managing the behaviors that will be needed to maintain health and safety. If done well, these communications can be an opportunity to deepen your customer relationships. When building your approach, it's important to consider the context and stakeholder set that will need to be communicated with, as well as the intended outcomes for each interaction.

Ask Yourself:

- How should you communicate with members during this period? Who needs to receive what information?
- What should you communicate in the case of a COVID-19 case in your location or building?
- Have you consulted with your attorneys to ensure that your actions are in compliance with local privacy laws and restrictions?
- Where should signage be located?
- How will you share important information externally so it is available to members, brokers, referral partners, and other stakeholders?

Consider:

Communicating frequently and transparently with members: In the current context, it's important to empower members to feel confident. You should strive to provide information openly and quickly, especially if it is potentially critical to employee safety. For some members, especially larger companies, you will likely need to interact with an expanded stakeholder set, such as HR, corporate real estate, or risk management, and should expand your procedures to allow for this.

Notifying landlord and members of COVID-19 cases or other major risks:

Your response plan should include a communication playbook in case of closures, a confirmed case in your location or building, critical supply shortages, or other major risks.

Making policies publicly available and building buy-in through education and feedback: Important information, such as location closures and response policies, should be prominently available and shared proactively with members and other key stakeholders. Consider rolling out changes through various channels, such as your website, emails, webinars, and in-person orientations. Do not forget about ecosystem partners who can help share this information, such as brokers and listings sites. Create formal and informal mechanisms for members and others to be able to learn more, ask questions, express concerns, and share positive and constructive feedback.

Preparing signage and wayfinding graphics: Various types of visual communications should be added throughout your location to indicate policies, wayfinding, maximum occupancy levels, furniture availability, cleaning and handwashing expectations, area closures, and more. Cleaning schedules should be made visible and updated regularly. Floor markers should be added to indicate one-way circulation, and so should spacing markers, to indicate safe distancing in high-traffic areas, such as reception desks and cafés.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **Industrious** implemented a wide-ranging communication plan to connect directly with members and central corporate stakeholders. This plan included increasing the frequency of member communications, standing up new virtual communities via Slack and the Industrious member portal, hosting one-on-one conversations and live webinars, and requiring that all members and visitors sign and commit to a new community safety pledge. Upon returning to the office, members will have an orientation with their community managers and receive a Back-to-Office Kit that contains PPE, tools to enable touchless interactions in the office and on their commute, a copy of the community safety pledge, and a personal note.



In **Kenya**, workplace operator **Ikigai** created a new Health and Safety Video Room, which will run live five hours a day during the week and be available via its member portal. The video room will provide an opportunity for members to learn about new safety changes and behavioral expectations, ask questions, reconnect with other members, and share feedback or concerns directly with staff.

Establishing New Practices and Procedures

HVAC and Air Quality

Optimizing air quality is an important part of health and safety planning since COVID-19 has been demonstrated to be transmitted via airborne aerosols. Air quality depends on base building system, HVAC design, fresh air exchanges, and filtration. Although research is still being done to see how humidity impacts COVID-19, it's possible that a certain amount of humidity can help slow down viral spread. You may want to consider raising humidity levels after hours, when a greater humidity is less likely to make members uncomfortable.

Given the reality that each building and system is different — and that weather can have an impact — no universal solution exists. As you put together your plan, it's important to speak with a trained HVAC technician or engineer, as well as your building engineer, before making any decisions.

Ask Yourself:

- How should HVAC settings be adjusted to maximize air quality?
- Should filters be added or replaced? What kind?
- How are you planning for additional costs to run and maintain the system?

Consider:

Cleaning supply and return vents: Work with your landlord or HVAC vendors to perform electrostatic cleanings on your system .

Increasing air intake and adding or replacing filters: Based on your current system settings and capabilities, consider changes that include: (1) disabling demand controlled ventilation; (2) eliminating recirculation by opening air dampeners as high as 100 percent to increase the amount of fresh air; (3) keeping systems running 24/7 to increase air flow; and (4) increasing filter efficiency to a minimum of MERV-13.

Adding free-standing air purifiers: Consider adding electrostatic or HEPA filters to common areas, member offices, meeting rooms, and other areas.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Europe**, workplace operator **Fora** has made changes to its ventilation protocols that go beyond its high existing specifications, which called for 100 percent outside, ambient air. Fora has disabled any heat recovery devices to reduce the risk of airflow crossover and extended operating hours of its ventilation system, which will run up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week, during the pandemic. System performance will be monitored by a variety of sensors, units will be cleaned regularly, and air filters will be replaced routinely.

Personal Protective Equipment

Face masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE) have been required or recommended by governments in communities or office settings in many parts of the world. Regardless of government orders, it's likely that a large percentage of the population will continue wearing face masks, and it's important that operators have a clear policy regarding PPE.

Ask Yourself:

- Should face masks or other PPE be required in common areas? By whom?
- Should staff be required to use face masks or other PPE? For what activities?
- Should members be required to wear PPE within their private offices?

Consider:

Encouraging the use of but not requiring PPE: Provide strong recommendations for using face masks throughout the office and guidance on how to properly wear them.

Requiring PPE in all common or shared areas: Require that face masks be worn in all shared spaces, such as common area, cafés, restrooms, and meeting rooms, and strongly encourage their use within private enclosed offices. Require that staff wear face masks at all times and gloves when conducting certain tasks, such as cleaning or café restocking.

Requiring PPE in all areas: Require that face masks are worn throughout your locations by all entrants.

Staff Training and Accountability

The success of your plan requires high-quality execution from your on-the-ground team. It's therefore crucial that your team feel safe and confident in implementing your plan and responding to the wide variety of new questions and scenarios that will be presented through this period.

Ask Yourself:

- How can you best equip and prepare your staff to return to the office?
- What should responsibilities and staffing models be adjusted?
- How is your team feeling? What are they anxious or excited about?
- What's your continuity plan for staffing?

Consider:

Increasing staff communication to build confidence and trust in your plan:

Your employees are likely feeling nervous about their health and safety during this period, as well as all the unknowns that will emerge once operations resume. Aim to increase your cadence of communication with your employees to daily or weekly updates on reopening, safety measures, and what will be expected of them. Prioritize conversations with and solicit feedback from your frontline staff — who likely deeply understand members' concerns — before finalizing your plans, then check-in regularly. Do so through surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one check-ins from managers.

Revising staff roles, responsibilities, and success metrics: As you draft up new safety standards as part of your plan, rewrite staff roles and responsibilities based on what will be required — for example, wiping down surfaces throughout the day or registering guests and members who enter the office — as well as those that may not be as relevant during this period. Communicate openly with your team about what will be required of them, what their new goals and success metrics will be, and what value they are delivering to members.

Creating new auditing procedures and increasing the frequency of reviews:

Based on your new standards, revise your auditing framework and increase the frequency of manager oversight and review. Ensure that any items considered high priority to the success of your health and safety plans receive immediate attention.

Investing in staff training: Provide robust training and support to all operations staff. When training your staff on new policies and procedures, take the time to explain how you came to make certain decisions, how these will impact them and your members, what their responsibilities are, and what questions remain. You may also need to do some cross-training, so, if necessary, staff can support multiple functions. Provide a forum for feedback and for staff to provide input for new ideas. Topics to consider include new policies and procedures, member communications, having difficult conversations, and more.

Updating your location-specific continuity plan: Ensure that you have a plan in place in case members of your team or supporting vendors are unable to perform their duties. This should include organizing key information (such as contact information or passwords) and alternate practices and staffing for daily operations and management, as well as for backup suppliers and vendors, and more.

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In **Mexico**, workplace operator **IOS Offices** has developed a new position called Safety Hero. These team members are responsible for sanitizing all visitors that come into their locations and guaranteeing that everyone who enters has completed their robust disinfection standards. Safety Heroes will wear a Tyvek suit, gloves, face shields, and face mask.



In **Asia**, workplace operator **The Great Room** split their corporate team across multiple locations as part of its business continuity plan. Each location team is staffed on different shifts to ensure redundancy and reinforce cleaning measures, the flow of traffic, and social distancing.



In **Israel** and the **U.K.**, workplace operator **LABS** has made a series of people-related changes. It has launched new training for all staff having to do with health and safety and have appointed a building champion within each location who will serve as dedicated leader for giving guidance and support on all COVID-19 items. In addition, LABS has instituted a rotating staffing model in which front desk staff will work in shifts in order to increase presence during rush hours and make them available beyond normal working hours. Finally, it has implemented staff protections that include placing a screen at reception and providing face mask and other PPE.

Key Considerations

Determining When to Reopen

When to reopen, or resume in-person staffing, is the first major question facing workplace operators. In many countries, the government has not provided consistent direction, and employers have largely taken a wait-and-see approach for non-essential workers. What is clear, however, is that returning to the office will take time — and may require subsequent closings and reopenings — and that COVID-19 will continue to impact different geographies in different ways for months or even years to come.

As workplace operators, we must abide by local and national government guidance, but also consider additional variables — such as public health recommendations, employee sentiment, brand perception, the availability of supplies and PPE, and the implementation of the building reopening plan — as we formulate our strategy.

Ask Yourself:

- When should you reopen or return staff to your locations?
- Do you understand the building reopening plan?
- What information or indicators should you reference?
- Should you reopen in phases?
- What safeguards should be in place before opening?
- How should you determine if you should close down again?
- How will your staff and members respond to a decision to open or close?

Consider:

Reopening when allowed by health authorities and when you are prepared to implement your plan: Reopen when health authorities lift restrictions for non-essential workers and you are prepared to implement recommended or required workplace safeguards and monitoring protocols, such as distancing or intensified cleanings. Conduct a deep- or medical-grade disinfection prior to reopening.

Selecting a future reopening date: Choose and communicate a target reopening date sometime after you expect shelter-in-place orders to cease, in order to provide clarity to members, staff, and others.

Adopting a phased approach with additional indicators: Create a decision tree for each of your locations that incorporates risk and operational readiness factors. For example, take the later date of either (1) the lifting of shelter-in-place orders or (2) a preferred containment indicator or basket of indicators (such as a seven-day increase in community-transmitted cases). In a phased approach, you go through a series of progressively less restrictive steps based on internal factors — such as member behavior or physical, operational, and supply readiness — and external factors — such as transmission data.

Determining When to Reopen

Workplace Operator Spotlight



In the **U.S.**, workplace operator **Industrious** established a phased reentry strategy for restaffing its network, which stretches across more than 50 different cities. Mirroring the approach that most city governments are taking, Industrious has created three reentry stages: Staff Reentry, Operational Ramp-Up, and Eased Restrictions. Each one is initiated by clear triggers. A medical-grade disinfection will be performed prior to reentry, and certain precautions, such as the use of non-essential common areas or mandatory face masks, will be relaxed in later stages based on pre-established criteria and updated guidance from public health officials.



In the **U.S.** and **U.K.**, workplace operator **Hana** closed all of its locations to any business that does not conduct an essential service, as defined by local and national government mandates. During this period, meeting room reservations will not be accepted and no visitors will be allowed in the offices.

Key Considerations

Responding to a Positive COVID-19 Case

In case of a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in your area or a confirmed or presumed case within your location or building, it's critical that workplace operators have an established plan so that they can respond immediately and effectively.

Ask Yourself:

- How should you determine if you should close down again?
- What do you do if there is a COVID-19 case in one of your locations or buildings?

Consider:

Creating a decision tree for viral resurgence: Include scenarios that are specific to your particular city, building, and office. While your decision tree may initially follow your criteria for reopening, it's important that it be adjusted and revisited as the scientific community's understanding of COVID-19 deepens. For example:

- If shelter-in-place orders are resumed, a location should be closed immediately;
- Or, if additional preferred containment indicators are surpassed, a location should be closed immediately.

Creating a decision tree for a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case within one of your locations or buildings: Your plan should follow health authority guidance and include detailed actions you will take related to disinfection, closure, and communications. For example, consider making a plan for:

- If there has been a confirmed or presumed case of COVID-19 from someone who has been in one of your locations in the last 14 days;
- If someone who has been in one of your locations has been exposed to someone with a confirmed or presumed case within the last 14 days;
- Or if you are notified of a confirmed or presumed case elsewhere in the building.

Your decision tree plan should include policies and procedures for location closure, disinfection, and internal and external communications (you can find a Decision Tree template in the Resources section).

Resources

Planning Template

For making your own plan

Decision Tree Template

For confirmed or presumed cases

Member Email Template

For confirmed COVID-19 case

Sample Supply List

For new supplies you may need

Signage Templates

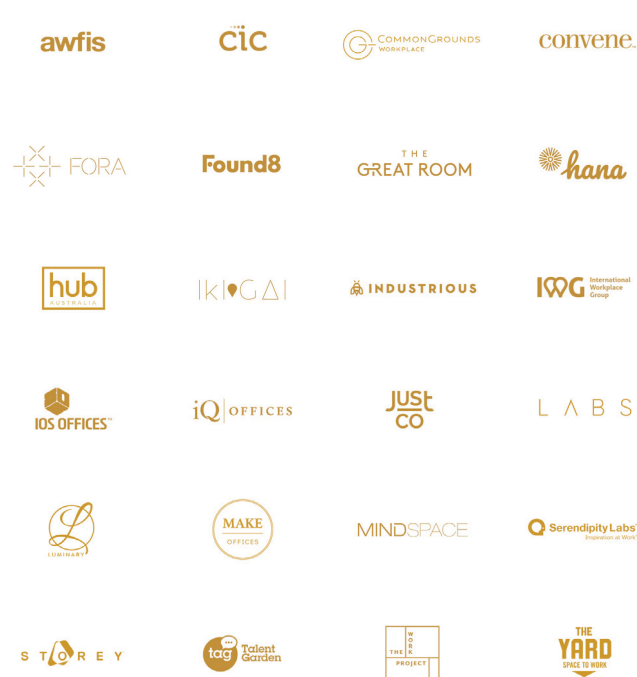
For select communications

About WORC

The Workplace Operator Readiness Council (WORC) is a global council of workplace operators who share, coordinate, and develop information for advancements towards a safe and healthy office. The council serves millions of individuals worldwide in more than 120 countries.

WORC is advised by recognized leaders across public health, architecture, engineering, design, construction, real estate, healthcare, and public policy.

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