



PCITM
Pennsylvania
Chamber Insurance

HUMAN RESOURCES



Welcoming Your Employees Back

In addition to the more building-focused steps of reopening (sanitizing, providing hand sanitizer/masks, etc.) there are other important steps employers can take to help their staff feel safe.

Employee Communication

Get out in front! A sure way to perpetuate rumors and sow the seeds of discontent is to leave your workers to their own imaginations regarding your plans. Don't put them into the position of having to guess what you're thinking or planning. Keep in mind communication is a two-way street.

Have Answers Ready

- Why do we have to come back to the worksite?
- How are you going to bring everyone back? All at once? In phases?
- What steps have you taken to ensure our safety?
- Why can't I just keep working from home?
- I'm a member of a vulnerable population. Can I continue to work from home?

Start with your managers

These are the leaders of your business units and will likely be in closer communication with staff than senior management. Make sure your managers are communicating the same message. An inconsistent message across departments or units is a recipe for disaster resulting in hurt feelings and damaged morale.

Be sure you clearly communicate your expectation that they will return to the worksite; that working from home is not a permanent solution. Be sure to tell them why you feel it is important to be back in your building. Make sure you've crafted a thoughtful response to this question. Just because you said so is definitely not going to be enough.

Consider a phased-in approach to bringing staff back

Things to consider:

Is the position "tied" to the building?

Try to bring these folks back first.

Is your building opening before the end of the regular school year?

If so, delay the return of these workers, if possible. These parents don't have day care arrangements because they didn't need them – school filled that role. Have a plan for the parents of school-aged children to have the

opportunity to work from home until the end of the school year.

Do you have staff members with compromised immune systems or other significant health factors?

Move them to the last phase and give them the option to continue working from home for an extended period of time – even if only part time.

Stop talking and start listening

Communicate frequently with your staff.

Ask them how they're doing.

Not just over-your-shoulder as you're walking away. Stop. Ask. Listen.

Encourage your staff to talk about their fears.

You can't dispel fears that are hidden from view. You don't have to have all the answers, just listen. Keep your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) info handy and encourage them to call if additional help needed.

Ask them if they need anything.

If it's reasonable and doable: Do it. Even if you can't, make sure they feel heard.

Ask for their suggestions.

Listen with an open mind. Do what you can but don't make promises you can't keep.

We're here to help!

The PA Chamber is helping PA businesses come back stronger than ever.

Visit us at www.bringingpaback.com