Planning the return to a physical workplace

As the easing of restrictions is underway, creating and implementing a return to a physical workplace plan is an immediate priority for organisations. This checklist will help to define key steps supported by factsheets from Safe Work Australia.

1. Establish a project team / utilise the Crisis Management Team (CMT)
   - Define the guiding principles for managing the return specific to your organisation, eg impact on clients, degree of urgency to return
   - Implement a consultation process
   - Risk assessment
   - Engage with the Building Manager (if applicable)

2. What to consider before returning to work
   - Understand each employee’s circumstances and attitudes to leaving home office (Download template)
   - Understand impact of changes to public transport for employees
   - Define ideal employee experience for re-entry
   - Prioritise work tasks; simplify processes, remove unnecessary admin
   - Redesign roles to focus on priority tasks
   - Develop a position on testing protocols eg temperature testing
   - Establish new standards for unwell staff entering the office/working from home/taking personal leave
   - Re-engage stand-downs, accommodating those afraid to return to workplace; understand your obligations
   - Plan a re-orientation, new policies for hygiene, outbreak reporting

Define and provide direction and guidance on the following:

- Psychological health and support of staff
- Implications of physical distancing
- Handwashing and hygiene
- Cleaning

Consider what flexible working arrangements look like in the ‘new normal’

Evaluate effectiveness of use of flexible work arrangements during COVID-19. How can these benefits be maintained? Define the flexible work policy for the future.
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3 Communications plan: implement regular and clear communications

- Adjust management communications as organisations develops resilience with working remotely
- Respond quickly to State Premiers’ updates and implications for work arrangements
- Consider management teams’ needs to continue to communicate effectively with remote teams

4 Create a plan for Day 1 / Week 1

Options include:

- Continue remote work arrangements
- Split teams
- Stagger start and finish times
- Extend office hours to enable physical distancing
- (Re)orient all staff to new workplace protocols

5 Plan in case of infection breakout in office or surrounds, or via transport

What to do infographic
Incident notification
Self isolation