



architects + engineers

A DESIGN FRAMEWORK FOR RETURNING TO THE OFFICE AFTER COVID-19

As we at H2M, continue to adjust to the impact of COVID-19, we are thinking about what a return to work will look like. In our ongoing commitment to meet our clients and partners' needs, we have developed guidance on returning to work and a framework for preparing your spaces properly. This guide covers the near-term transition back to the workplace — from employee readiness, to distance analysis, to new protocols to consider as we look forward.

ACTIVITY	AREAS OF CONCERN	ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION
Main Entrances & Exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Door hardware• Elevator buttons• Shared surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control all points of entry for staff, guests, and vendors.• Provide hand sanitizer stations in elevator lobbies.• Establish elevator social distancing guidelines for multi-story buildings, consider voice automated elevators.• Keep open doors where possible and implement utilizing face coverings when social distancing cannot be maintained.
Office Space Entrances & Exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building entry (where paths converge/high touch surfaces)• Elevators/Stairs (close quarters/high touch surfaces)• Foot traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rely on touch-reducing amenities.• Pay particular attention to cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.• Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells. Consider limiting the number of individuals in an elevator and designating one directional stairwells, if possible.
Security Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distance between people entering• Distance between security and individuals• Touchpoints (IDs, pens, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control traffic flow and occupancy with floor markings for spacing and travel paths.• Consider having alcohol-based hand sanitizers in common areas.• Leverage touchless access for operating doors, elevators, and visitor processing.

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Reception Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene • Shared items (magazines, corporate swag, etc.) • Distance between guests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine entrance to office, including how access is gained, determine whether to eliminate or reduce seats in the reception area (including removing seats as appropriate to facilitate physical distancing). • Consider other modifications (e.g. plexiglass to protect the receptionist) to the reception area. • Establish protocols; determine what signage is needed. • Establish a system for ascertaining when people access and leave the office (e.g. a log). • If guests are allowed, consider requiring guests to arrive at a specific time/call before arriving. • Determine how frequently to clean and maintain the areas during the workday (it is wise to ramp up maintenance significantly). • Require entry to be quick and efficient, discourage or prohibit socializing; consider providing equipment upon entrance to those who do not have it (e.g. masks/face coverings); have disinfectant hand liquid available. • Consider removing (any) shared materials. • Implement automated water dispensers, so employees and visitors can refill water bottles in a hands-free manner.
Restrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touchable surfaces • Hand dryers and paper towels • Social distancing • Entrances and exits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether to limit the number of people who may be in a restroom at one time, consider depending on the size of the restroom, to limit access to one person at a time. • Provide a mechanism that displays when the restroom is occupied. • Provide wipes or paper toweling that may be used to open and close all doors and to touch faucets, with waste cans nearby for discarding the wipes or paper toweling. • Consider modifying certain items, such as providing automatic soap dispensers. • Provide appropriate signage reminding people to practice good hygiene (e.g. handwashing, cleaning surfaces that have been touched, etc.) and to report issues. • Determine how frequently to clean and maintain the areas during the workday (it is wise to ramp up maintenance significantly).
In-House Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registers/Pay kiosks • Food stations • Self-serve condiments/utensils • Water/Coffee/Soda dispensers • Dish drop (if applicable) • Microwaves (if applicable) • Trash and recycling • Distancing between customers • Buffet items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether to allow seating in the kitchen, and if permitted, how to limit seats so that there is physical distancing (including removing seats as appropriate to facilitate physical distancing). • Do not provide communal food and if food is provided, make sure the packaging is individualized. • Do not use ice machines that involve a handheld scoop. • Discourage or prohibit people from lingering; place appropriate signage in a visible location (including reminding people to practice hygiene measures such as hand washing). • Consider partitions between registers and patrons. • Keep the cafeteria closed outside of meal times.
Office Workstations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance between workstations • Cleanliness of workstations • Communal tools: telephones, pens, paper, stapler 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rethink density to prioritize physical distancing. • Reconfigure flex spaces. • Design with antimicrobial materials. • Provide proper cleaning products. • Continue to improve professional cleaning and disinfecting procedures. • Establish new workplace etiquette/protocols and communicate via signage posted throughout workplace. Be sure to consider ADA implications when making changes. • Establish enhanced occupancy and employee tracking for building location, space utilization, and potential infection zones.

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Meetings & Conference Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper social distancing • Shared tables and technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how many people can safely occupy a meeting room with appropriate physical distancing. • Remove seats as appropriate. • Place appropriate signage in a visible location to remind people to maintain physical distance. • Require or encourage remote meeting with virtual tools where employees remain in their workspace but attend virtually. • Limit size and location of any in-person meeting. • Clean between uses, making sure all surfaces that may have been touched are disinfected. • Remove and discourage use of shared tools, such as remote controls and conference room phones. • Provide hand sanitizer stations.
Copiers/Shared Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared items at copier (paper, stapler, paper clips, etc.) • Touchspaces • Number of people congregating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how to reduce or limit access to equipment, while still providing the needed function. • Provide disinfectant materials or sanitizing wipes nearby. • Manage number of employees congregating at stations.
Communal Kitchen/Break Room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee/Tea machine • Water dispenser machine • Sink • Vending machines • Refrigerator • Ice machine • Dishwasher • Microwave • Toaster • Touchable surfaces • Number of people congregating (meal times) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide whether to allow access to the kitchen, and if access is permitted, how to limit access so that there is physical distancing. • Determine whether to provide disposable supplies such as coffee cups, drink cups, plastic silverware, and paper dishes. • Consider modifying items such as providing automatic soap dispensers; provide gloves if appropriate. • Determine whether to allow seating in the kitchen, and if permitted, how to limit seats so that there is physical distancing (including removing seats as appropriate to facilitate physical distancing). • Determine how frequently to clean and maintain the areas during the workday (it is wise to ramp up maintenance significantly). • If vending machines, coffee pots, or the like are to be used, consider providing disinfectant materials or sanitizing wipes.
Engineering & Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality • Water quality • Structural changes • Indoor environment • Surface contamination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider examining items such as ventilation, temperature control, humidity, and other factors relating to the HVAC system. Also determine whether there is adequate airflow; consider obtaining proper advice regarding ventilation, filtration, temperature, and humidity in all areas, including the restrooms. • Other things to consider are the plumbing systems throughout your facility. We recommend that you evaluate touchless fixtures, things like hand dryers and also water fountains. We can help guide you as to which systems should be taken off line or modified to accommodate this pandemic. • Since many of the buildings have been sitting dormant for the past two months, implement a flushing program to flush out contaminants such as Legionella in the hot water systems. Sampling should be done after the systems are flushed to ensure that there are no other contaminants that have formed over this two month period.
Mailroom & Deliveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple people handling mail • Surfaces that mail resides on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a protocol for deliveries and office visitors that keeps them distanced from the employee population. • Consider establishing a separate defined space for packages to remain for a certain time period. If possible, have packages disinfected prior to office delivery.