



REOPENING

The World's Workplaces

The implications of COVID-19 have been profound, and the path to business recovery is evolving and fluid. This paper is a briefing for occupiers of space and landlords who manage their buildings—wherever they are in the response-to-recovery process. We are sharing our expertise and advice based on a rapidly growing body of experience, detailed guidance documents, technical specifications, protocols, and tools that we have developed for and with our clients and for our own CBRE workplace.

CBRE



WHAT TRIGGERS RECOVERY?

As governmental restrictions permit the return to work and businesses are broadly allowed to reopen workplaces, occupiers should be prepared to determine their own thresholds and policies for welcoming employees, customers, and visitors back to their offices and places of business. This may include factors like availability of widespread testing, reliable and sustained accessibility to key cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment, the ability to support social distancing and frequent cleaning, and regulatory requirements and implementation of best practices.

A SAFE & HEALTHY PLAN

All work environments—whether owned or leased offices, warehouses, labs, retail stores or manufacturing facilities—will require careful consideration and tailored plans. From the occupier perspective, we have organized our guidance into three key categories: Planning for the Return to the Workplace, Bringing Employees Back to Work, and Ongoing Management of the Workplace.

MOBILIZING A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL RECOVERY TEAM

It is critical to establish a centralized, multi-disciplinary task force as soon as possible to help plan and oversee recovery efforts across the portfolio. Consider including leaders from the following disciplines:

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RECOVERY MANAGEMENT TEAM – RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINES:

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| + Executive Sponsor | + Finance |
| + Program Lead | + Legal (Corporate, Regulatory & Employment) |
| + Business Leadership | + Technology |
| + HR/People | + Workplace Strategy |
| + Health Safety Environmental (HSE) | + Procurement |
| + Operations | + Security & Crisis Management |
| + Real Estate & Facilities | + Communications |

Planning for the Return to the Workplace

Our experience supporting clients in Asia suggests that reopening workplaces and commercial establishments is not straight-forward. Forethought is critical as important activities must be approached in fundamentally new ways. Some of these key areas include:

- **Safety, Health and Wellbeing:** Businesses should prepare for a more discerning workforce that will expect continuous, credible assurances that they are working in a safe environment. This will include clear displays of updated safety, health and wellness information and resources for employees, visitors, and occupants throughout the building both inside and outside the workplace.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Relationships with key stakeholders need to be reset as organizations mobilize to come back to the workplace. Consider this preliminary list of stakeholders with whom to communicate and coordinate prior to reopening a facility or workplace.

OCCUPIER STAKEHOLDERS

- + Business Leaders
- + Functional Partners (e.g., HSE, HR)
- + Employees
- + Contractors
- + Supplier Partners
- + Landlords
- + Amenity Providers

PROPERTY OWNER STAKEHOLDERS

- + Tenants/Occupiers
- + Property Manager
- + Supplier Partners
- + Amenity Providers

- **Business Requirements and Work Arrangements:** Early lessons from Asia indicate bringing teams back “full throttle” is unwise and inconsistent with most public health guidance, which recommends that social distancing measures be reduced in a gradual and thoughtful manner. Employers will need to establish a plan that enables gradual increasing numbers of people to return to the workplace.
- **Procurement and Financial Considerations:** Both occupiers and landlords should give serious consideration to new levels of service, materials, and activities necessary to facilitate a return to the workplace. Examples of areas that may require advanced sourcing activities and increased funding include enhanced cleaning; introduction of new access protocols (e.g., temperature screening); increased quantities of supplies such as hand sanitizers, wipes, gloves, masks; reconfiguration of work environments and associated technology and equipment; utilization tracking technologies; touchless technologies; and more.
- **Portfolio and Workplace Strategy:** Occupiers should conduct a holistic review of business requirements and portfolio implications to assess and optimize their medium- to long-term positions and options considering anticipated changes to workplace strategy in a post-COVID-19 world. We anticipate most occupiers will settle on a balanced approach that builds in greater resiliency by introducing a spectrum of physical and virtual solutions based on business needs.

Bringing Employees Back to Work

Preparing to reopen requires the development of detailed plans for each location, reconfiguration of the physical environment to de-densify and support social distancing practices, and continuous communications.

- **Facility Readiness:** The facility readiness process is extensive, and no detail is too small to consider. It entails conducting a comprehensive assessment of the physical building and taking steps to prepare for reentry where controllable. In leased locations, occupiers and property owners should communicate openly to develop a plan that will support the back-to-work process.
- **Reconfiguration:** Public health guidance strongly suggests that social distancing measures should be stepped down very gradually. Occupiers and property owners can convey their safety efforts to occupants by taking tangible steps to make changes to the physical environment that support physical distancing and other safety practices.

Ongoing Management of the Workplace

Reoccupying work environments for the long-term should be approached as a “reset” of ongoing soft services to support the workplace environment. It also entails continuous and frequently updated communications to employees and occupants to provide education and awareness of safety, health, and wellness activities underway.

- **Operations:** Conduct a comprehensive review of all operational activities and services that occur in the work environment.
- **Continuous Response and Readiness:** Once the space has been reoccupied and work resumes, occupiers and property owners should remain vigilant and quick to respond to unexpected or unwelcome events. Both parties should keep protocols in place if exposure concerns return. Everyone should be prepared to return to “response” mode in the event of a suspected or confirmed exposure.
- **Communications:** Leading organizations are putting a heightened focus on communications, recognizing that this must be an ongoing, deliberate, thoughtful effort that touches and engages all key stakeholder across both physical and virtual work environments.

SUMMARY

With so much uncertainty still ahead of us, it's hard to plan with full confidence. Occupiers can benefit from detailed, location-by-location reopening readiness efforts. Working together, occupiers and landlords can both benefit from open, proactive, and practical dialogue about what the total workplace environment—from the front door of the workplace and common areas to the occupier's offices—needs to look like for a safe and healthy return to work.