#SafeReturnFXBG

Fredericksburg Regional CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

A Guide to Responsible Re-Entry to the Workplace

As the Fredericksburg Regional business community adjusts day-to-day operations in response to COVID-19, we must balance the need to maintain our region's economy with the protection of our community's health. The Safe Return FXBG Guide provides a road map for organizations of all types across the region to use as we re-open our workplaces, while considering the public health needs of our workforce, stakeholders, customers and community.

How to use this guide

The Safe Return FXBG Guide should be used along with guidance from the following: state public health departments; the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations; Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines; Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) rules and regulations; trade association guidance; as well as all other laws applicable to your workplace to re-open the community after Stay-at-Home and other social distancing orders are lifted.

State public health criteria used in the recovery plans include monitoring of the number of new virus cases in the community, increase in the capacity for testing and contact tracing, availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), and availability of hospital beds, including ICU beds. More information on these resources are available at the end of this document.

Your workplace re-entry plan should consider unique aspects of your organization, including your workforce, company culture, the type and size of your business, organizational structure, geographic location and any other special circumstances. It should also be dynamic, allowing for flexibility as circumstances in your business and your community change.

This guide provides a phased approach to workplace re-entry, addressing key considerations for your organization's plan related to workforce, workspace and operations. You can use this guide in its entirety or adopt elements to create a tailored re-entry plan that best fits the needs of your organization.

1/ Learn

As you create and update your organization's ongoing workplace plan, it's essential to understand the most up-to-date details of the community public health policies and recommendations affecting your workplace(s). We suggest all organizations review and understand these policies prior to crafting their own back-to-workplace plan and continuously review these documents as they are updated.

2/ Listen

Actively seek employee and customer feedback about returning to your workplace. This insight will help you understand attitudes within your organization, as well as reinforce to your employees and customers that their health and safety concerns are valued.

• Consider meeting (virtually) with your employees to understand their comfort re-entering your workplace and what questions or concerns may exist with respect to any new guidelines and protective measures in the workplace. During this meeting, you can ask any employee whom you know to be disabled (i.e. they have previously requested a reasonable accommodation) if they will need a reasonable accommodation when permitted to return to the workplace. You may also consider implementing a questionnaire allowing individuals to indicate if they are a vulnerable individual as defined by the CDC.

• The questionnaire should include the definition of vulnerable individuals as defined by the CDC (currently those with underlying health conditions, including, but not limited to, high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma and those whose immune system is compromised – vulnerable employees may also include those who live with, or care for, anyone who is elderly or has an underlying health condition) but should not request the employee to identify the reason they are vulnerable.

• The information gathered during this meeting should not be used as criteria to eliminate workforce and all reasonable steps should be taken to assure employees that their responses will remain confidential. Also, the information gathered in this meeting should not be maintained in employee personnel files. Ensure all decision-making regarding which employees to return to work, when to return them to work, on what schedules, and the like, is based on legitimate, non-discriminatory considerations.

• Offer employees additional information and resources, including contact information for your EAP, if applicable.

• Consider designating a trusted point-of-contact within your organization that employees can go to with questions or changes to their health and/or COVID-19 related health information of those they come into close contact with.

3/ Communicate

Transparent and consistent communication is key for a successful re-entry. Regularly engaging with your workforce, stakeholders and customers before, during and after their re-entry to your workplace will help alleviate anxiety and encourage open and trusting communication. This active dialogue will help increase adherence to new policies and procedures, as well as enable your organization to adapt as guidelines change.

- Communicate revised organizational practices and policies to all employees in advance of their implementation.
- Share new customer and contractor/supplier protocols through social media and other direct communications to prepare them for new policies and procedures.
- Consider requiring training (virtually) to ensure employees understand all practices and policies before returning to the workplace.
- Continue to provide policy updates to all audiences as they evolve.
- Identify a central point-of-contact within your organization to answer questions from employees, stakeholders and customers as it relates to reentry and ongoing workplace policies.

• Maintain a readily accessible copy of your re-entry plan for review by employees.

4/ Evaluate

As the COVID-19 landscape continues to change, it is imperative to regularly monitor local, state and federal guidelines, industry-specific and/or trade association guidance, as well as your own organization's circumstances to adapt your policies. Most public health experts predict that COVID-19 will be present and impact our economy and business operations for many months, and additional waves of the virus may require reinforcement of certain restrictions. Therefore, your organization's return-to-workplace policy should be consistently reviewed and updated as the COVID-19 landscape changes.

- Do not make evaluations of vulnerable employees or customers based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, or age.
- Understand the quality and safety standards of personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for your workplace.

- Refer to the next section of this document for additional information on PPE. Select resources on PPE appropriate for varying industries are also referenced in the Additional Resources section.

• Consider potential business expenditures required to execute your plan, including purchasing PPE, increased absenteeism, transportation and childcare assistance and supplemental employee resources/benefits, among others. Allow sufficient time to order PPE that may be in high demand and short supply.

• Evaluate any supplemental policies for your plan. For example, some jobs may require additional PPE, flexibility to work remotely, etc.

- Social distancing should be maintained when possible. Some positions may continue to work remotely, and some office spaces may be reconfigured for greater distance and fewer unnecessary workforce interactions.

• Consider forming an internal task force to review and make necessary changes to your back-to-workplace policy.

5/ Precautions Measures: Sanitizing, Personal Protect Equipment & Social Distancing

Responsible and successful re-entry will depend on whether your organization has sanitizing and personal protective equipment (PPE) procedures that can help keep your employees and visitors safe. While these standards vary, general guidelines include:

- Soap and/or hand sanitizer should be provided:
 - Throughout work areas
 - In all restrooms
 - In all common areas and break rooms
 - In all conference and meeting rooms
 - Near each workplace entrance and exit

• Applicable Additional Equipment: Gloves, glasses/shields, masks/face-coverings, gowns, cleaning supplies, shared office space partitions and other relevant PPE, depending on industry type and/or employee job function, should be provided and their use mandated as needed with all employees. For specific guidance on best practices, please refer to these resources:

- CDC: Hand Hygiene Information
- CDC: Cloth Face Covering Information

- OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

- Trade Association Guidelines

Visit the Additional Resources section of this document for more information.

• Supply Chain: Confirm you have appropriate and effective supply channels in place for sanitizing products and PPE applicable to your workforce and workplace.

• Training: It is imperative that your organization not only provide PPE, but that you provide and require training in the proper use, care, and disposal of PPE, especially when new procedures are implemented.

- CDC: Using Personal Protective Equipment

- OSHA: Safety & Health Topics: COVID-19

• Social distancing: The heart of COVID-19 mitigation strategies is social distancing. To practice social distancing in the workplace, ensure that people remain at least 6 feet from one another and avoid group gatherings. Additional information on the value and best practices of social distancing can be found here:

- CDC: Social Distancing, Quantine and Isolation

• Reminders, Digital Communication and Signage: Your organization should place physical or digital visual cues encouraging adherence to new standards of practice throughout the workplace.

- CDC COVID-19 Communication Resources

- Encourage individual Responsibility:
 - Employees should be encouraged to not enter the workplace if exhibiting symptoms endemic of COVID-19 or if they have been in known contact with someone exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or diagnosed with COVID-19.

- Employees should be encouraged to report to a supervisor if they begin to feel ill while at the workplace or have come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 or exhibiting symptoms.

- Provide employees connection points to occupational health or other resources for addressing questions on symptoms.

Moving through Phases

We recommend returning to your business operations in phases modified to avoid disruption caused by COVID-19 or its spread. This phasing standard is intended to compliment your local or state plans and the Federal Government and CDC's guidelines.

- See: Guidelines for Opening Up America Again

Each of the three successive phases in this plan relaxes social distancing protocols and other precautionary measures intended to slow the potential transmission of COVID-19. The Federal Government and CDC further recommend that certain community-wide symptoms, case and hospital thresholds be met before proceeding from one phase to the next.

Phase naming, numbering, or coloring may vary between this document and an applicable federal, state, county or local government's approach. Please refer to applicable guidelines

to ensure consistency with government policy.

The following general principles should also be followed throughout all phases of re-opening:

• Always follow local, state and federal public health guidelines throughout your returnto-workplace plan, including returning to a previous phase in response to a virus surge, if necessary.

• Provide clear guidance within each phase for the safety of your workforce, customers and other visitors, and to set relevant and reasonable expectations.

• Some items listed in this guide may not be relevant/necessary to include in your phase(s), and/or you may need more guidance that is unique to your organization.

• Create and maintain an organizational strategy for workforce contact tracing following an employee COVID+ test, should it be necessary.

Employee Guidelines:

• Communicate to all employees that the Federal Government and CDC recommend that all vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place during this phase. These recommendations also state that members of households with vulnerable individuals should be made aware that returning to work or other environments where social distancing is not practical increases the chance that they could carry the virus back home.

• Establish flexible return-to-workplace protocols:

- Encourage employees to work remotely, whenever possible.
- Return your workforce in phases, whenever possible.

- Consider alternating schedules/shifts between workplace return and working remotely.

- Consider moving meals to the end of shifts, allowing employees to avoid gathering during mealtimes in common areas and allowing early departure without losing pay.

- Consider staggering co-located workforce to ensure operational continuity by job type, physical proximity, and management level.

- Cross-train employees, as possible, to prepare for work shifts and the possibility of increased absenteeism.

• Employees who have tested COVID-19 positive, or report any symptom of COVID-19, should not return to the workplace until they are free of all symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e. feverreducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and have been cleared by a medical provider.

- CDC: Symptoms of Coronavirus

- Employees should be encouraged to take their own temperature twice each day
- once before entering the workplace and once after work.

• Consider providing no-contact thermometer(s) at your workplace for employees to use at the beginning and end of their workday if they do not have a thermometer at home.

• Employees who feel ill or have any COVID-19 symptoms during the work day should contact their supervisor or designated employer resource, be separated from co-workers immediately, provided a mask, sent home, and, whenever possible, be allowed to work from home. Access to the employee's workspace should be limited and professionally sterilized after business hours to prevent cross-contamination. Such employees should remain outside the workplace until they are free of all symptoms of illness for 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e. fever-reducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.).

- CDC: If You Are Sick

• Employees who share a home with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have come in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, should self quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact. They should not be allowed to return to work until the completion of their quarantine period, they are free of all symptoms of illness for at least 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e.fever-reducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and have been cleared to return to work by a medical provider.

• Consider added flexibility in sick and personal leave policies to encourage employees who are not feeling well to stay at home and mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

- Don't require documentation of medical clearance for non-COVID-19 related illnesses or absent a COVID-19 diagnosis of the employee or someone with whom the employee has come into close contact. Many health care workers are responding to critical community issues and documentation may be delayed. However, employees showing COVID-19 symptoms should nevertheless be cleared by a medical provider prior to returning to the workplace.

• Employees should be required to wear masks/face coverings when not working at their personal workspace.

• Employees who work in open or shared workspaces without sufficient partitioning should be required to wear masks while at their workspace.

• All employees should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Employers should provide soap and/or hand sanitizer.

- CDC: Handwashing - Sanitizer Use and Information

- FDA: Hand Sanitizer Information

• Employees should be assigned to disinfect their personal workstations at the start and end

of the workday. Disinfecting spray/and or wipes should be provided by the employer.

• The hand-passing/sharing of paper documents within the workplace should be eliminated,

whenever possible.

• Encourage employees to record who they contact during each workday to assist with

possible virus tracing.

• Develop training procedures for safe interactions with guests, vendors and delivery drivers.

• Consider making special accommodations for employees at higher risk of severe illness.

- CDC: Need Extra Precautions

General Workplace Guidelines:

• Limit access of non-employees into your workplace. If applicable, limit/control the entry and exit door for employees.

• Establish a 6-foot clearance around all front desk/reception locations, if applicable, to assist with the practice of social distancing.

• Adapt security check-in process, including the use of personal pens and disinfecting sign-in tablet prior to each use. Record all visitors for potential contract tracing purposes.

• Provide markings within the workspace to promote social distancing and consider foot traffic protocols to reduce employee contact in high-traffic areas.

• When possible, and in compliance with applicable fire code, doors to rooms and offices should remain open to avoid frequent touching of door handles. Devices to open doors automatically or by foot should be considered whenever possible.

- If your business requires outside visitors, consider the following:
 - Clearly post social distancing guidelines.
 - If possible, contact visitors in advance to explain organizational protocols.
 - Provide masks or require visitors to use their own.
 - Provide hand sanitizer as visitors enter and exit your workplace.

- Provide clothing covers (e.g. dry-cleaning bags) for visitors to cover/contain their outerwear (coats, scarves, hats, personal PPE) upon arrival. Encourage visitors to keep all personal items with them during their visit.

• Adjust your workspace environment. Employees closer than 6 feet together should have a protective barrier separating them, or they should be re-configured to accommodate appropriate spacing.

• Implement sanitizing protocols for frequently touched surfaces in your workspace to reduce the volume of physical contact. Frequently touched surfaces include light switches, drawers and cabinets, and shared equipment such as printers and copiers.

• Whenever possible, shared office phones should be eliminated. Any phones shared by employees should be thoroughly cleaned after each use.

• Designate a specific location for all deliveries and disinfect that area regularly.

• Implement workflow process and designate personnel for handling mail, files, supplies etc. to ensure proper sanitation.

• Implement social distancing and cleaning protocols for elevator and escalator usage.

• Contact your landlord or property manager to request increasing ventilation system usage and/or opening operable windows to increase air ventilation.

• Review your lease to understand the respective cleaning responsibilities of your company and your landlord/property manager. Consider additional contract cleaning for shared and high-traffic spaces.

• Modify existing emergency response plans to address social distancing for meeting points, tornado shelters, and similar areas.

Meeting Rooms:

• Whenever possible, in-person meetings should be discontinued and replaced with virtual meetings.

• Essential in-person meetings should be limited to employees only, and social distancing should be maintained, if possible.

• Meeting with stakeholders and customers should be conducted virtually at every opportunity.

• Reduce the standard room capacity for meeting rooms and personal offices to ensure at least 6 feet of space between all participants. Communicate new capacity via signage and room reservation tools.

• Remove extra chairs from rooms or place them in the corner away from the table to demonstrate and enforce proper spacing.

• Disinfect meetings rooms, particularly frequently touched surfaces, before and after each use. Cleaning products should be provided in each room.

- CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

• Employees should be designated to disinfect meeting rooms at the start and end of every workday.

• Require employees to record attendance at meetings and meeting locations for potential contact tracing purposes.

• Remove whiteboard pens and erasers from shared spaces and encourage people to bring and manage their own.

• Remove all shared food and beverages from meeting rooms.

• All shared equipment and collaboration tools and technology (touch pads, conference phones, laptop plug-ins, etc.) and similar equipment should be cleaned by employees after each use.

• Hand sanitizer and surface cleaning supplies should be provided in all meeting rooms.

🗾 🚄 Common Areas:

:• Close or limit access to common areas.

• Rearrange or remove furniture in common areas where employees are likely to congregate.

• Enforce strict social distancing protocols in all common areas.

• Hand sanitizer and surface cleaning supplies should be provided in all common areas.

• All common areas should be disinfected and cleaned throughout the day by designated employees, particularly frequently touched surfaces including handles and counter surfaces.

• All employee food containers should be sanitized before storing in a common area. Food stored in a common refrigerator should be sanitized and placed into clear sealed plastic bags. A name and a date should be written on the bag. Food should not be stored in the workplace for more than 24 hours.

• Reduce the capacity of people allowed in any fitness room/gym; this may require the removal of some equipment to encourage 6 feet of space between people. Equipment should be wiped down before and after each use.

Travel:

• Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC and local health department guidelines regarding isolation after travel.

• Employees taking personal travel should adhere to CDC and local health department guidelines regarding isolation after travel.

- CDC: Travel Guidelines

Employee Assistance Guidelines:

• Human Resources staff or a designated point-of-contact should be readily available to answer questions related COVID-19 issues and mental health assistance.

- HHS: COVID-19 Use/Disclosures of Protected Health Info by Business Association - April 2020

- Health and Human Services: HIPAA Privacy and Novel Coronavirus February 2020

- HHS: Limited Waiver of HIPAA Sanction and Penalites - COVID-19

- HIPAA for Professionals - COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness

Employee Guidelines:

• Communicate to all employees that the Federal Government and CDC recommend that all vulnerable individuals should continue to shelter in place during this phase. Further, these recommendations state that members of households with vulnerable residents should be made aware that returning to work, or other environments where distancing is not practical, increases the chance they could carry the virus back home.

- Continue with your organization's flexible work plan, slowly increasing your staff.
 - Encourage employees to work remotely, whenever possible.
 - Return workforce in phases, whenever possible.
 - Consider alternating schedules/shifts between working in the office and working remotely.

• Employees who have tested COVID-19 positive, or report any symptom of COVID-19, should not return to the workplace until they are free of all symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e. feverreducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and have been cleared by a medical provider.

CDC: Symptoms of Coronavirus

• Employees who share a home with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have come in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, should self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact. They should not be allowed to return to work until the completion of their quarantine period, they are free of all symptoms of illness for at least 72 hours and cleared by a medical provider.

• Employees who feel ill at work should contact their supervisor or designated employer resource, be separated from co-workers immediately, provided a mask, sent home, and, whenever possible, be allowed to work from home. Such employees should remain home until they are free of all symptoms of illness for 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (I.e. feverreducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and cleared to return to work by a medical provider. Areas they came into contact with should be very carefully disinfected.

CDC: If You Are Sick

• Maintain the 6-foot clearance around all front desk/reception locations, if applicable, to assist with the practice of social distancing.

- Record all visitors for potential contact tracing.
- Provide markings within the workspace to promote social distancing and consider foot traffic protocols to reduce employee contact in high-traffic areas.
- If your business requires outside visitors, consider the following:
 - Clearly post social distancing guidelines.
 - If possible, contact visitors in advance to explain organizational protocols.
 - Provide masks or encourage visitors to use their own.
 - Provide hand sanitizer as visitors enter and exit the building.
- · Maintain your adjusted workspace environment.
- Maintain sanitizing protocols for frequently touched surfaces in your workspace.

• Maintain workflow processes and designate personnel for handling mail, files, supplies etc. to ensure proper sanitation.

• Continue evaluation of your work environment, ensuring it still provides moderate social distancing.

Meeting Rooms:

• Whenever possible, in-person meetings should remain limited.

- Essential in-person meetings should be limited to employees only.
- Meeting with stakeholders and customers should be conducted virtually at every opportunity.

• Maintain standard room capacity for meetings rooms and personal offices to ensure at least 6 feet of space between all participants.

• Disinfect meetings rooms, particularly frequently touched surfaces, before and after each use. Cleaning products should be provided in each room.

CDC: Cleaning & Disinfecting Your Facility

- Require employees to record attendance at meetings and meeting locations for potential contact tracing purposes.
- Remove whiteboard pens and erasers and encourage people to bring and manage their own.
- Remove all shared food and beverages from meeting rooms.
- All shared equipment and collaboration tools and technology (touch pads, conference phones, laptop plug-ins, etc.), and similar equipment should be cleaned by employees after each use.
- Hand sanitizer and surface cleaning supplies should be provided in all meeting rooms.

Common Areas:

- Limit access to common areas.
- Rearrange or remove furniture where employees are likely to congregate.
- Enforce moderate social distancing protocols in all common areas.
- Hand sanitizer and surface cleaning supplies should remain in all common areas.
- All common areas should be disinfected and cleaned at the beginning and end

of the day by designated employees, particularly frequently touched surfaces including handles and counter surfaces.

• Sanitize all employee food/containers before storing in a common area. Food should not be stored the workplace for more than 24 hours.

• Reduce the capacity of people allowed in any fitness room/gym; this may require the removal of some equipment to encourage 6 feet of space between people. Equipment should be wiped down before and after use.

Travel Guidelines:

• Non-essential business travel can resume. Isolation after traveling should be in accordance with CDC and local health department guidelines.

• Employees taking personal travel should adhere to CDC and local health department guidelines regarding isolation after travel.

CDC: Travel Guidelines

Employee Assistance Guidelines:

• Human Resources staff or designated point-of-contact should be readily available to answer questions related COVID-19 issues and mental health assistance.

Employee Guidelines

• Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

• Resume normal employee work schedules and unrestricted staffing of worksites.

• Employees who have tested COVID-19 positive, or report any symptom of COVID-19, should not return to the workplace until they are free of all symptoms for at least 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e. feverreducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and have been cleared by a medical provider.

CDC: Symptoms of Coronavirus

• Employees who share a home with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or have come in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, should self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact. They should not be allowed to return to work until the completion of their quarantine period and they are free of all symptoms of illness for at least 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (i.e. fever-reducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and cleared to return to work by a medical provider.

• Employees who feel ill at work should contact their supervisor or designated employer resource, be separated from co-workers immediately, provided a mask, sent home, and, whenever possible, be allowed to work from home. Such employees should remain home until they are free of all symptoms of illness for 72 hours, without the use of any medication that might mask symptoms (I.e. feverreducing medicine, cough medicine, etc.), and cleared to return to work by a medical provider. Areas they came into contact with should be very carefully disinfected.

CDC: If You Are Sick

- Employers should encourage hygiene best practices from all employees.
- Employees should continue to disinfect personal workstations periodically.

Building Access/Building Modifications:

- Normal access for non-employees can resume at your workplace.
- · Record all visitors for potential contact tracing.
- Continue to provide hand sanitizer to visitors as they enter and exit the building.
- Return to your customary workspace environment if any changes were made.

Meeting Room Guidelines:

- Regular in-person meetings can resume.
- Meeting with stakeholders and customers should be conducted virtually at every opportunity.
- Resume standard room capacity for meetings rooms and personal offices.
- Encourage employees to record attendance at meetings and meeting locations for potential contact tracing purposes.

• Return whiteboard pens, erasers and other community office supplies to their standard place.

Common Area Guidelines:

- Return common areas to their standard configuration.
- All common areas should be disinfected daily.
- Fitness equipment should be wiped down before and after use.

Travel Guidelines:

• Resume normal business travel.

Employee Assistance Guidelines:

• Human Resources staff or designated point-of-contact should be readily available to answer questions related COVID-19 issues and mental health assistance.

Legal and Medical Disclaimer: The information contained in this document does not constitute legal or medical advice. All employers should consult with their legal counsel, medical, and health and safety advisors specific to their jurisdiction and industry to develop strategies applicable to their workplace. Public safety codes, building codes, and any applicable laws and security requirements should not be compromised when adjusting the workplace for your employees' return.

Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 Business Resource Guide <u>http://www.fredericksburgchamber.org</u>

Fredericksburg Regional Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 Business Recovery Guide <u>http://www.fredericksburgchamber.org</u>

Forward Virginia Blueprint https://www.governor.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Health <u>https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/</u>

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