

Transforming Workplaces for a COVID-19 World and Beyond

Due to COVID-19 and the resulting law changes, executive orders, economic decline, and risks to employee well-being, employers must take appropriate action in their workplaces for the short-term and long-term. The following is a check list of items employers should address when updating their workplaces.

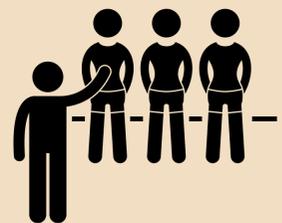
Policies and Procedures



- Establish preparedness plan addressing administrative and engineering controls and personal protective equipment to ensure a safe and healthy workplace
- Develop uniform and consistent process for administrative procedures and notices to employees to take prompt, interim workplace actions and modifications
- Update or establish policies and procedures addressing telework, absence and leave flexibility, flexible or staggered scheduling, communications, time and work recording, and technology for non-work site use

Communications

- Establish means to communicate COVID-19 response notices and expectations electronically and in employer facilities
- Provide training on safe workplace controls
- Require supervisors to do more check-ins with their subordinates, especially those working remotely
- Modify means for employees to communicate on issues such as timekeeping and leave requests



Controls and Operations

- Require frequent hand washing and encourage masks
- Require frequent cleaning of facilities and prohibit or limit sharing of equipment
- Specify steps that must be taken by an employee who has COVID-19 symptoms, diagnosis, exposure, or high-risk factors
- Implement engineering controls at worksites (e.g. physical barriers and ventilation)
- Cross-train employees due to fewer employees performing work on any day
- Establish ways to use more technology to communicate and conduct work



Budget-Saving



- Review policies and labor contracts to determine actions that can be taken unilaterally (i.e., not requiring union agreement) to save money
- Assess and terminate or modify non-required practices that are costing money
- Direct supervisors to take administrative actions that can save money
- Do job analysis and evaluation to determine if job classifications, job descriptions, and base pay need to be updated based on modification of duties and responsibilities
- Consider various cost-saving options
 - Wage structure freeze, wage movement within pay range freeze, reduce base wages, or no performance, merit, or incentive pay
 - Reduce opportunities for specialty or premium pay
 - Reduce fringe benefit levels or types, employer contributions to fringe benefits, or payments for education, training, or other professional development
 - Furlough
 - Reduce hours
 - Subcontracting
 - Hiring freeze
 - Layoff
 - Voluntary separation incentives

For consultation, analysis, or representation on COVID-19 issues or other labor, employment, or human resources matters, contact Flaherty & Hood, P.A. labor and employment attorneys or analyst.

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