Emerging from the pandemic: How businesses are preparing for the new frontier

June 14, 2021

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Emerging from the pandemic: How businesses are preparing for the new frontier

Presented by: J.T. Holt, Michael Kostiew, Elizabeth Windsor, and Ashley Workman

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Today's topics

✓Best practices for COVID-19 protocols

✓Landlord versus tenant responsibilities for COVID-19 mitigation

✓The future of teleworking and flexible work arrangements

✓Reintegrating employees into the workplace

Best practices for COVID-19 protocols

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Workplace masking policies

- **May 13, 2021**: CDC issued new masking guidance
  - **Fully vaccinated people** can resume pre-pandemic activities without wearing a mask or social distancing.
  - **Unvaccinated people** should follow prior masking guidelines.
- Under CDC's new guidance, fully vaccinated people must still comply with requirements of:
  - State and local governments.
  - Local businesses and employers.

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Workplace masking policies: Pennsylvania

- **March 17, 2021**: PA's masking order amended to incorporate CDC guidance
- **May 13, 2021:** Effectively modified when CDC issued new guidance
- **May 31, 2021**: All COVID mitigation orders, **except** masking, were lifted
- **June 28, 2021**: PA masking order will be lifted in its entirety
  - May be lifted sooner if 70 percent statewide vaccination rate is reached

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Workplace vaccine policies

Mandatory vaccination policies

- Generally permissible under federal anti-discrimination laws.

- Potential risks due to Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?

- Accommodations: (i) disability/medical reasons; (ii) religious reasons; (iii) pregnancy status

- FLSA /wage-and-hour compliance

- Workers' compensation

- Vaccination passport restrictions

Workplace vaccine policies (cont.)

Voluntary vaccination programs

- Encourage vaccination

- Inform employees on where and how to obtain vaccine

Incentivized vaccination programs

- Must be entirely voluntary/not coercive: avoid pressuring, "too much" encouragement

- PTO, gift cards, small cash "bonus" are okay, generally

- BUT, beware of potential exposure to…

  - Wage & hour liabilities: cash payments could require OT wage calculation adjustments

  - Tax liabilities if more than *de minimis* gift

  - Limitations on wellness program rewards, depending on prize value

  - Discrimination claims: disparate treatment and/or impact

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Workplace vaccine policies (cont.)

Which option is the best for my organization?

- Does the makeup of your workforce warrant a mandatory vaccination policy?

- How will the company gather and track (whether mandatory or voluntary)?

- Proof of vaccination: Honors system vs. vaccination card and/or medical documents vs. employee attestations?

- How will the company store this information? Confidentiality obligations apply.

- What, if any, incentives to provide?

- Employee morale issues: Stirring controversy?
  Will there be "vax shaming"?

- Can HR handle the administrative logistics/burdens?

Other best practices

✓Current quarantine guidance for "close contacts"

✓Recommendations for individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19

✓Traveling, both domestically and abroad

CDC quarantine guidance

Quarantine after "close contact" exposure

- **Fully vaccinated:** If no new symptoms, no need to quarantine or get tested

- **Unvaccinated, but tested positive within the past three months and fully recovered:** If no new symptoms, no need to quarantine or get tested

- **Unvaccinated, otherwise:**
  - Ten days without testing; or
  - Seven days after receiving a negative COVID-19 test result (with test occurring on day five or later)

In all cases of "close contact" exposure, monitor for symptoms for at least 14 days after exposure.

CDC quarantine guidance (cont.)

Isolation after confirmed COVID-19 infections

- **Asymptomatic**: ten days after first positive test
- **Symptomatic**:
  - Ten days after onset of symptoms **and**
  - At least 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) **and**
  - Other COVID-19 symptoms are improving

Test-based strategy for breaking isolation no longer recommended

- May test positive for up to three months
- Recommended only if new symptoms

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CDC air travel guidance

For vaccinated people:

- **Domestic travel**: No post-travel testing or quarantine needed.
- **International travel**: Testing 3-5 days after international travel, but no need to quarantine

For unvaccinated people (domestic and international):

- Before travel: Viral test 1-3 days before your trip
- While traveling: Masking, social distancing, other mitigation
- After travel:
  - Viral test 3-5 days after travel **and** quarantine for at least 7 days after travel (even with a negative test result)
  - If untested, quarantine for at least 10 days after travel
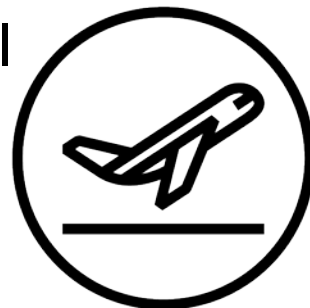
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Landlord versus tenant responsibilities for COVID-19 mitigation

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Landlord versus tenant

Lease issues facing companies returning to the office

- Who makes decisions on COVID-19 protocols?
  - What does the lease say?
  - What actually happens?
- Who picks up the additional cost?
  - Know the details of your lease!
- Can my company alter or modify its space?
  - Landlord approval and consent rights
- Can our company give up space?
  - Early surrender/continuous operation/"go dark" rights

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Facility-related COVID-19 protocols

Is the space safe?

- Mold inspections

- Rodent and pest inspections

- Water testing

- Necessary remedial actions

Keeping the space safe:

- HVAC – disabling demand-control ventilation

- Extending HVAC operating hours (pre- and post-occupancy hours)

- Air filtration improvements

- Increased cleaning

What does your lease say?

Example 1:

Landlord control = common areas

Tenant control = exclusive areas

- Landlord maintenance obligations are tied to a specific standard.

- Shared HVAC and water systems are usually common elements/subject to landlord decision-making authority.

- Landlord makes decisions for common areas/tenant makes decisions for exclusive areas.

What does your lease say? (cont.)

Example 2:

Full-service lease

- Landlord operates all areas of the building
- Landlord maintenance obligations are tied to specific standards
- Tenant may have the right to request (and receive) additional services (for a fee)

What does your lease say? (cont.)

Example 3:

Tenant-operated building

- Tenant has exclusive control over operations and maintenance
- Sometimes tied to a minimum standard, but otherwise up to tenant to decide
- Landlord has no control/authority (except to enforce an applicable standard)
- Most flexible for the tenant, but tenant also absorbs the cost

The applicable standard

The applicable standard for landlord maintenance obligations is key to whether tenant will be able to require landlord to implement additional COVID-19 protocols:

- Potential standards: first class condition; Class A office space; good condition and repair; landlord's reasonable discretion; landlord's sole and absolute discretion

- If the standard is vague, courts construe the standard as subjective, which makes it hard to predict the outcome of a dispute

- Reference to specific industry standards can be helpful

- Direct that landlord must follow specified recommendations (like CDC guidelines)

- Specify frequency of particular maintenance obligations

Lease rules and regulations

Watch out for rules and regulations!

- Many leases have rules and regulations attached as an exhibit

- The rules can be subject to change by landlord (sometimes in its sole discretion)

- Existing rules or a change in rules could put additional obligations onto to tenant

- Conflicts between rules and lease terms

Who pays?

Potential lease costs

- Testing/investigations (mold, water, legionella)
- Remediation
- Utility cost for extended HVAC
- Janitorial costs
- Cleaning supplies

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Who pays? (cont.)

Lease models

- **Base Year Model**: Tenant pays any increase in operating expenses above a "base year"
  - Under this model, tenant is likely to pick up all additional costs incurred due to COVID
  - Tenant should have a right to audit expenses (subject to time limits)
- **NNN Model**: All operating expenses (regardless of base year) are passed through to tenant
  - Sometimes subject to a cap
  - Decision-making authority is critical for these types of arrangements
  - Tenant should have a right to audit expenses

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Who pays? (cont.)

- **All-Inclusive Model**: Tenant's base rent includes all operating expenses

  - Good news for tenant cost!

  - But, landlord probably has decision-making authority (i.e., no obligation to perform additional testing or mitigation measures)

- **Tenant-Operated Model**: Tenant picks up all costs for operation

  - Tenant gets to decide!

  - But, tenant will have to pay

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Can my company alter or modify its space?

- Most leases contain an "alterations" clause.

- Tenant might have the right to make changes under a certain threshold (i.e., $50,000).

- Landlord usually reserves the right to approve major alterations or modifications.

  - Changes above a certain threshold

  - Changes to location of structural walls

- Some leases prohibit alterations altogether.

- Pay attention to surrender obligations.

  - Do improvements become property of landlord?

  - Can the landlord make you remove the alterations at the conclusion of the lease (could be a significant added expense)?

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Can my company give up space?

Early surrender rights

- Some leases allow tenants to forfeit some space by providing notice to landlord

- Early termination fee applies

- Watch out for landlord recapture rights – giving up some space could trigger landlord's right to take back all the space

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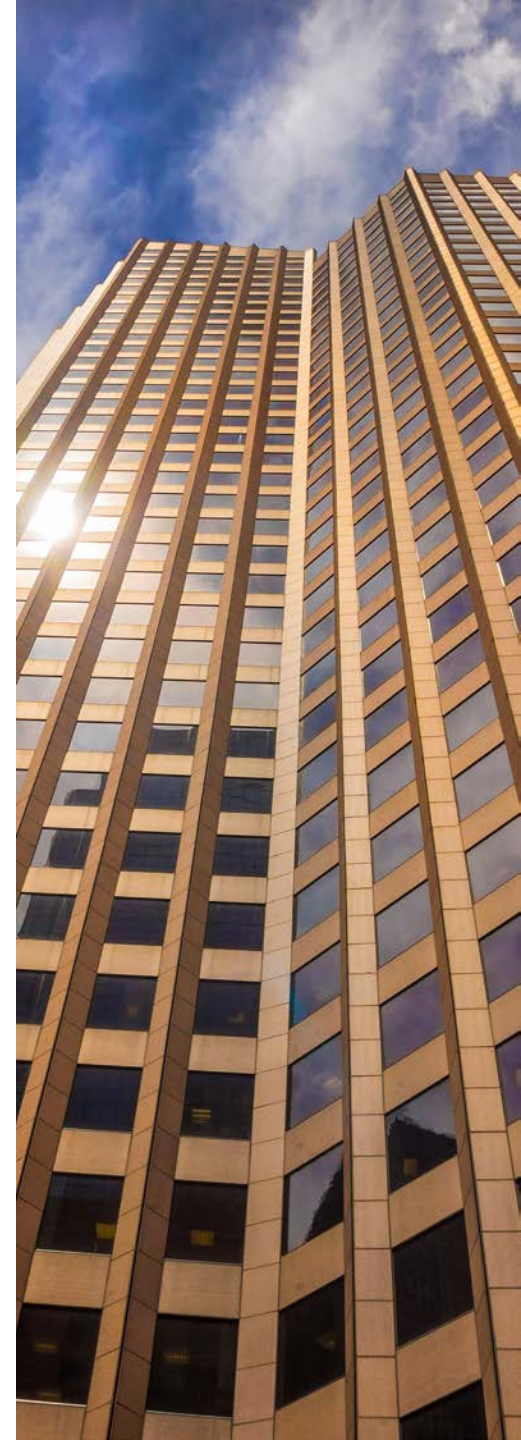
Can my company give up space? (cont.)

The right to "go dark"

- Even if you don't surrender the space, can you "go dark" for some of your space?

- Some leases contain express "go dark" provisions that allow the tenant to keep space that is unused.

- Are you subject to certain operating requirements?

- Watch out for abandonment clauses! Abandonment (sometimes even partial abandonment) results in landlord recapture rights or tenant default.

Upcoming lease renewals

- Opportunity to negotiate for reduction in space needs.

- Opportunity to finance alterations/modifications of existing space through a tenant improvement allowance.

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The future of teleworking and flexible work arrangements

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I expect all of my employees to return to the office full-time. Are there any downsides to requiring this?

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements

Expected increase in requests for remote work

- Remote work presents benefits for both employers and employees.

  - Nearly 70 percent of full-time workers worked remotely in 2020.

  - Workers may not want to return to the office or may prefer a hybrid approach (work-life balance).

  - There are cost savings of working remotely for both employers and employees.

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements (cont.)

Balancing employer needs with employee morale

- More than 75 percent of employees working remotely in 2020 said they felt more trusted by their employer

- Employer challenge of maintaining productivity and engagement while fully or partially remote

  - Is it sustainable remotely over the "long haul"?

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements (cont.)

Options for remote work/flexible work arrangements

- Entirely remote workforce

- Fully remote or flexible work arrangements for all employees

- Fully remote or flexible work arrangements for some employees

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements (cont.)

Considerations:

- Maintaining productivity and engagement:
  - Regular check-in meetings
  - Remote team-building exercises
  - Address career progression concerns
  - Create a permanent work-from-home policy
- Create a standardized means by which employees can request and are evaluated for a remote/flexible work arrangement
- Office hoteling to provide workspaces as-needed
  - Will this be a continued/revising trend if remote work increases?
  - Risks of using shared spaces/sanitation concerns

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements as a workplace accommodation

COVID-19 reportedly has had a heightened impact on certain groups:

- Employees with certain health conditions
- Older employees
- Pregnant employees
- African American, Hispanic, Asian, and other underrepresented employees

COVID-19 has also led to a number of groups of employees resisting returning to the workplace:

- Employees with fears, concerns, sensitivities, and the like
- Employees with children and other family responsibilities
- Employees collecting enhanced unemployment benefits

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements as a workplace accommodation (cont.)

- **Americans with Disabilities Act** protects qualified individuals with a disability

  - A "disability" is an impairment that substantially limits a major life activity
    - Physical conditions
    - Mental health conditions

- **Interactive process**: The availability and reasonableness of an accommodation must be determined on a case-by-case basis under the circumstances

- **No entitlement to preferred accommodation**: Teleworking may be a reasonable accommodation, but it may not be the only (or best) option

Teleworking/flexible work arrangements as a workplace accommodation (cont.)

- Employers may not exclude employees from the workplace based on age, gender, or race – even "for their own good."

- At the same time, employers are not required to offer reasonable accommodation for COVID-19 on the basis of age, gender, or race.

- Employers should advise employees of their particular risks, engage in an open, interactive dialogue to address concerns, and consider limited accommodations.

Reintegrating employees into the workplace

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Potential for a spike in resignations

- Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey shows close to 6 million fewer resignations in 2020 than in 2019.

- However, the March 2021 resignation rate was 2.4 percent, the highest recorded for the month of March in 20 years.

- Uncertainty caused by the pandemic may have led those who would have otherwise resigned to stay in their current job.

- Employees who worked remotely during the pandemic may be reluctant to return to the office until vaccination rates are higher, or at all.

Helping employees find ways to achieve work-life balance and deal with continuing pandemic-related concerns may help mitigate turnover.

Potential increase in litigation

- **Discrimination claims** stemming from employment decisions on layoff, returning to work, etc.

- **Discrimination/retaliation claims** arising under the FMLA, FFCRA, and/or ADA

- **Failure to accommodate claims** based on religion or disability

- **Harassment claims** based on national origin, disability, and other protected classes

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Modified social standards

Handshakes, which were formerly considered a standard professional greeting, may take some time to be the norm again.

- Remember that not all employees may be vaccinated, and vaccinated employees may have lingering fears/discomfort.

Cafeteria/lunch room etiquette may be different than pre-pandemic times.

- Consider employee apprehension of being unmasked and in close proximity to others, especially if vaccination status is not known.

- Provide more private break/lunch spaces, or permit employees to eat in their offices.

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Modified social standards (cont.)

Social anxiety may make initial interactions awkward or difficult.

- Start off meetings with a casual "catch-up" session to assist employees in regaining a level of comfort with their colleagues.

Regaining and maintaining professionalism

Office-appropriate attire

- Reiterate any workplace policies pertaining to dress code.

- Consider permitting "casual days" to facilitate transition initially.

Frequent tardiness as employees readjust to commuting

- Remind employees of company attendance policies and potential consequences of recurring tardiness.

Regaining and maintaining professionalism (cont.)

New communication norms?

- Employees have become more accustomed to remote means of communications:

  - Videoconferences

  - Telephone

  - Emails

  - Text messages

- *"Do we really need to meet in person?"*

- Establish clear expectations for how employees are to communicate with each other and with management

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Regaining and maintaining professionalism (cont.)

New conduct/behavioral norms?

- People may have become more relaxed and/or intolerant when dealing with others after working at home for 15+ months.

- Many changes have occurred over the past 15+ months to our society, generally – e.g., pandemic, civil rights movements, politics and political developments – about which many people have developed strong opinions.

- **Consider**: Providing "return-to-work" training and/or updating policies.

Return-to-work training

Consider hosting a virtual reorientation training:

- Discuss expectations and changes before employees return to the office.

Provide new/updated diversity, equity, and inclusion and/or awareness and sensitivity training:

- Promote reporting policies and procedures, and reassure strict compliance with anti-retaliation policies.

Revise employee handbooks as needed:

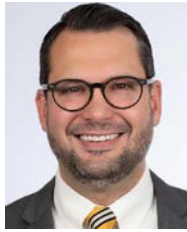- Provide notice to employees and/or retain signed acknowledgement forms.

Questions

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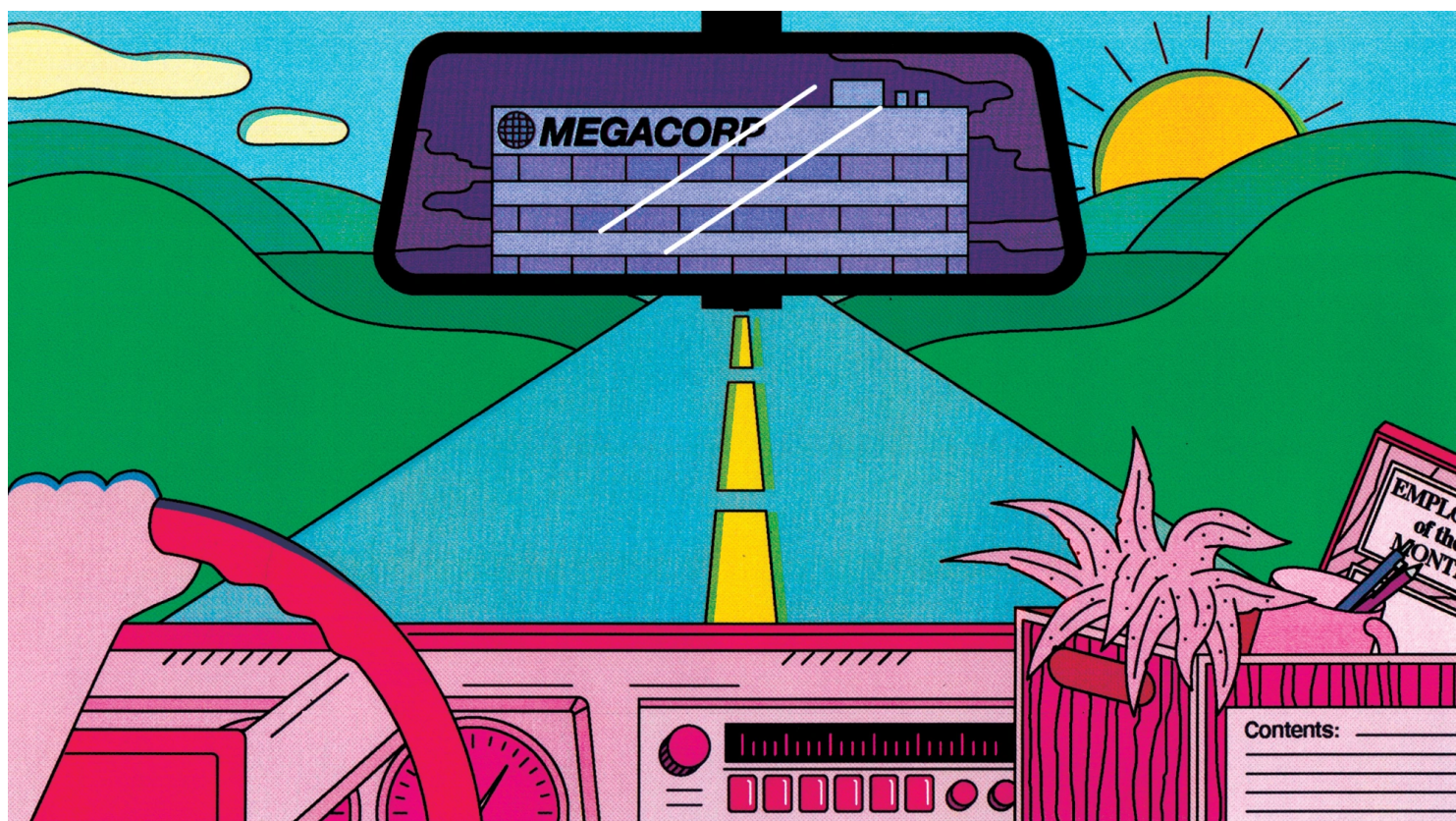
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CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Anthony Klotz The Covid vaccine means a return to work. And a wave of resignations.

For everyone exiting the pandemic feeling burned out, know you are not alone.

—— Higher employee burnout and enhanced financial security is a recipe for increased resignations.

George Wylesol / for NBC News

May 30, 2021, 9:14 AM EDT

By Anthony Klotz, associate professor of management in the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University

Employees across the United States are beginning to transition into post-pandemic work life, as cities reopen, vaccination rates go up, mask mandates are rolled back and offices start the arduous process of recalling their employees – some of whom may not want to come back regularly, or at all. Clearly, it will be a complex transition, complicated even more by indications that the shift will be accompanied by a wave of resignations.

Employees across the United States are beginning to transition into post-pandemic work life.

First, due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, many employees who would have otherwise quit their jobs stayed put. Indeed, using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey to examine total (nonfarm) quits over the past two years, there were close to 6 million fewer resignations in 2020 than there were in 2019.

As the pandemic subsides, these would-be quitters who "sheltered in place" last year will likely enact their plans to leave. In fact, this surge of turnover is already underway: The resignation rate in March was 2.4 percent, which was the highest quit rate recorded for that month in 20 years. In short, the backlog of resignations caused by the pandemic are now beginning to clear.

We know that generally many employees only stay at their jobs because the costs of leaving are higher than the costs of staying, and this ratio has shifted for many workers over the past year. The costs associated with staying have risen, with many workers experiencing burnout – a key contributor to voluntary turnover. At the same time, some costs associated with quitting have decreased. The pandemic has provided many Americans with an opportunity to reduce expenses, pay off debt and save money. Combined, higher employee burnout and enhanced financial security is a recipe for increased resignations.

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But the pandemic has also forced many of us to re-evaluate what's important in our lives. As a result of this introspection, people across the country are making major life changes – although socioeconomic privilege is an important factor here. But whether deciding to go back to school, start a business, stay home with family more or retire early, these live pivots often involve stepping away from traditional work arrangements.

Finally, the big one. Millions of Americans experienced working remotely for the first time during the pandemic, and at least anecdotally it seems many enjoyed it. Given that humans have a fundamental need for autonomy, the freedom that remote work provides can be very

appealing, and the flexibility is a boon to caregivers and working parents. Moreover, although (some) employees may miss seeing their work colleagues in person, a significant percentage of workers do not want to return to work until all of their co-workers are vaccinated, according to a March survey from Harvard Business School Online.

In other words, as companies make plans to end remote work, in many cases forcing employees back into the office, millions of workers are experiencing the most severe case of the Sunday Scaries of their lives.

Governors offer cash incentives to lure employees back to work

What is the common thread across these resignation trends? One answer comes from research on human well-being, which aligns with centuries of philosophy in proposing that people tend to pursue two overarching goals in life: happiness and/or meaning. Work is central to many of our lives; as such, the extent to which our job is a positive source of satisfaction and purpose plays an outsize role in whether we feel that our lives are happy and meaningful overall.

When viewed through this perspective, what is driving The Great Resignation is fairly straightforward: The pandemic has made many realize their job does not contribute enough (or at all) to their pursuit for happiness and meaning, and they have decided to invest their energy elsewhere – in new jobs, new careers or in other aspects of their lives (e.g., family, travel, creative endeavors).

For managers at all levels of organizations (some of whom themselves may be contemplating resigning), The Great Resignation presents a challenge. On the plus side, not all employee voluntary turnover is bad. There are still millions of talented workers who are unemployed and eager to re-enter the workforce. Many employees have struggled while working remotely and are ready to return to the office, at least part time.

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But the fact remains that turnover is often disruptive and expensive, especially given that the employees who are most able and likely to quit during times of change are the highest performers, and no company likes losing their stars. And it's likely inevitable.

So what should organizational leaders do? During this transition, it may be tempting to demand that work returns to the way it was and deem employees who do not want to return to the old normal as entitled or uncommitted. But that would be a classic example of lazy management. Instead, managers should recognize that to retain their workers, a new normal may be required. The question is, what should this new mode of working be?

Managers should recognize that to retain their workers, a new normal may be required.

There is likely a great deal of variance from one employee to the next regarding how they are coping with work and life right now. Gaining an understanding of what employees are experiencing, and how to respond, is not something that pulse surveys or town hall meetings are well-equipped to provide.

A more personalized, listen-first approach is needed. That means having one-on-one conversations with employees about their well-being and about how their jobs can be re-crafted to support their pursuit of happiness and purpose. During these sessions, managers and employees must truly listen to one another to build common ground and allow employees to flourish, thereby driving firm performance in the post-pandemic economy.

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For employees who are exiting the pandemic feeling burned out and considering a career change, know that you are not alone. The good news is that companies are still trying to figure out how to capitalize on the new ways of working that have been uncovered over the past year, and as they do, the opportunities to find a work arrangement that enhances your well-being will be greater than they have ever been.

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Anthony Klotz

Anthony Klotz is an associate professor of management in the Mays Business School at Texas A&M University. His research focuses on how employees resign from their jobs, how contact with nature at work can benefit employees, and how doing good deeds at work sometimes psychologically frees employees to behave badly.

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Seasonally adjusted	
Industry:	Total nonfarm
State/Region:	Total US
Area:	All areas
Data Element:	Quits
Size Class:	All size classes
Rate/Level:	Rate
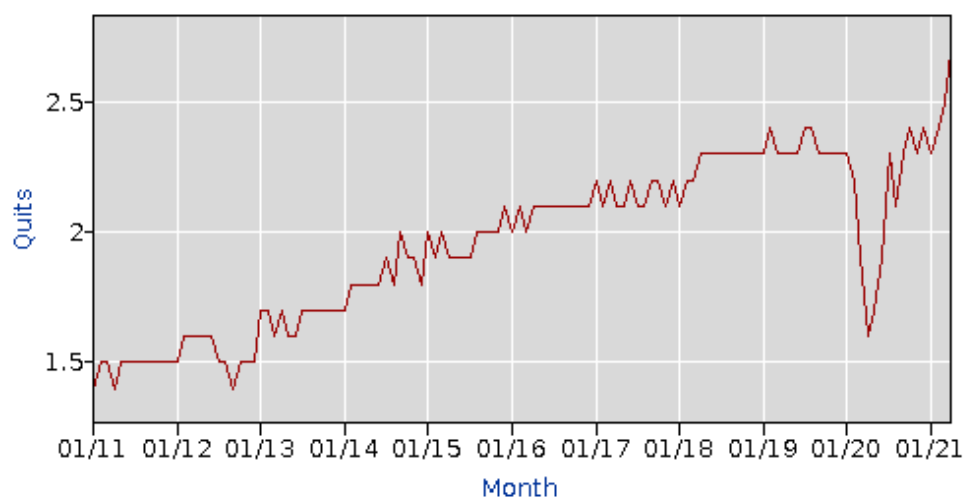
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2013	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
2014	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8
2015	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1
2016	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
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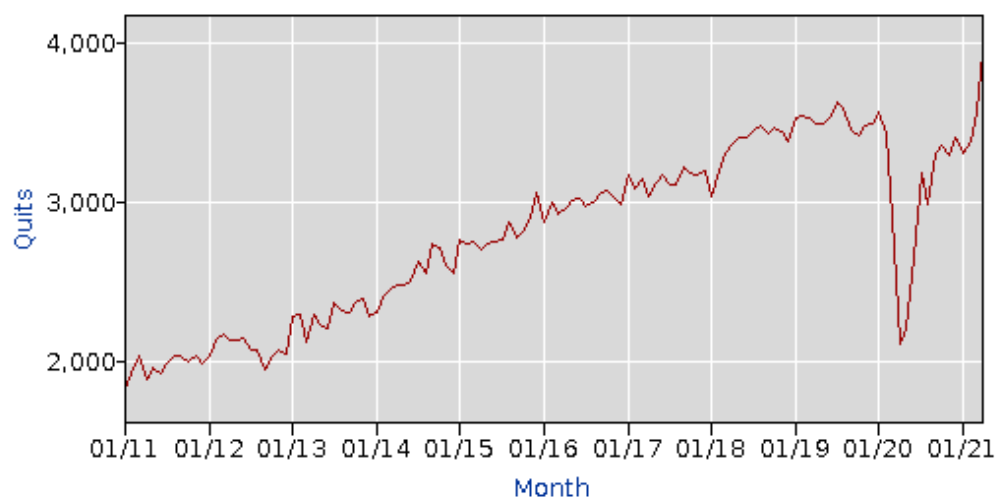
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Title:	An Ordinance providing for special conditions for the operation and use of Paid Sick leave under the Paid Sick Days Act during and due to the crisis presented by COVID-19 through inclusion in the Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances of Chapter 626A: Temporary Emergency COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave. (Executive Session held 12/7/20) (Post Agenda held 12/7/20)		
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History (7)   Text

Title
An Ordinance providing for special conditions for the operation and use of Paid Sick leave under the Paid Sick Days Act during and due to the crisis presented by COVID-19 through inclusion in the Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances of Chapter 626A: Temporary Emergency COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave.
(Executive Session held 12/7/20)
(Post Agenda held 12/7/20)

Body
WHEREAS, the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh issued a Declaration of Emergency ("Declaration") in response to the existing public health emergency associated with the spread of COVID-19 on March 13th, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the City of Pittsburgh has continued to ratify the Declaration on March 17th, 2020 and renew the Declaration to remain in effect; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania issued and continues to renew a Proclamation of Disaster Emergency, and, in accordance with the Pennsylvania Disease Prevention and Control Act, cite, the Governor's Office and Pennsylvania Department of Health have since issued various orders, providing directives and guidance to businesses and the public to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, City Council by passage of Ordinance 27 of 2015 provided for the "Paid Sick Days Act" in the City Code of Ordinance which, among other requirements, mandated a grant of sick time for certain employees working within the City of Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, the Paid Sick Days Act permitted employers to provide the required time off on an accrual basis; and

WHEREAS, the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*, H.R. 6201, Public Law No. 116-127, was passed by the federal government earlier this year to provide limited sick time to certain employees adversely impacted by COVID-19 and defined a small business as those under 50 employees; and

WHEREAS, employers within the City of Pittsburgh have an interest in maintaining operations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh has an interest in collection of various tax revenues to provide basic and essential governmental services; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh has an interest in preventing spread of COVID-19 within and throughout the City of Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, the exigent circumstances posed by COVID-19 require balancing those interests; and

WHEREAS, the City of Pittsburgh finds it appropriate to mandate that employees receiving Paid Sick time under the Paid Sick Days Act should be provided such time immediately without need for accrual in the event that the use of Paid Sick time arises from COVID-19.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH AS FOLLOWS:
Section 1: The City of Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances shall be amended by inclusion of the following new Section 626A (the "Chapter"):
CHAPTER 626A: - TEMPORARY COVID-19 EMERGENCY PAID SICK LEAVE

    A.   Unless otherwise provided hereunder, all capitalized terms contained herein shall be defined according to Section 626.02 of the City Code. Further, any Sick Time provided pursuant to this Chapter 626A shall conform in all respects to the requirements, procedures, and regulations of Chapter 626, except as specifically stated herein. For the purposes of this Chapter, "COVID-19 Sick Time" shall mean Paid Sick Time that is made available for one or more of the purposes set forth in Section H of this Chapter. This Chapter shall cover Employers of 50 or more

Employees and shall apply to Employees who are (a) working for that Employer within Pittsburgh after the effective date of this Ordinance, (b) normally work for that Employer within the City of Pittsburgh but are currently teleworking from any other location as a result of COVID-19, or (c) work for that Employer from multiple locations or from mobile locations, provided that 51% or more of such employee's time is spent within the City of Pittsburgh.

B.   The option of Employers to withhold Sick Time on an accrual basis is hereby temporarily revoked if an Employee's otherwise permissible Sick Time use request arises directly from COVID-19. Such Employers shall make available the maximum amount of Sick Time required under Chapter 626, to Employees immediately upon hiring if their otherwise permissible requested use arises directly from COVID-19. Employers may continue to require receipt of Sick Time on an accrual basis for all other permissible requests for use of Sick Time under Chapter 626.

C.   Employers with 50 or more Employees shall provide COVID-19 Sick Time to Employees in the following amount:

    i)   For Employees who work 40 hours or more per week, COVID-19 Sick Time shall be provided in the amount of 80 hours, unless the employer designates a higher limit;

    ii)   For Employees who work fewer than 40 hours in a week, COVID-19 Sick Time shall be provided in an amount equal to the amount of time the Employee is otherwise scheduled to work or works on average in a 14-day period, whichever is greater and unless the employer designates a higher limit. In the case of an Employee whose schedule varies from week to week, the Employer shall use the following in place of such number to determine the amount of time worked on average in a 14-day period: (i) Subject to a number equal to the average number of hours that the Employee was scheduled over the past 90 (ninety) days of work, including hours for which the Employee took leave of any type.

D.   COVID-19 Sick Time shall be provided to Employees immediately without any waiting period or accrual requirements, once they have been employed by the Employer for the previous ninety (90) days. An Employee shall be entitled to use this COVID-19 Sick Time until one (1) week following the official termination or suspension of the public health emergency.

E.   COVID-19 Sick Time shall be in addition to any paid leave or sick time provided by the Employer or pursuant to Chapter 626, and an Employee may choose to use COVID-19 Sick Time before any sick time under Chapter 626.

F.   With respect to an Employer that provides paid leave on the day before the effective date of this Act, the COVID-19 Sick Time in addition to such paid leave; and the Employer may not change such paid leave on or after such effective date to avoid being subject to this section. An Employer may not require an Employee to use other paid leave provided by the Employer to the Employee before the Employee uses COVID-19 Sick Time, unless state or federal law requires otherwise.

G.   Employees who are exempt from overtime requirements under 29 U.S.C. § 213(a)(1) of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act will be assumed to work 40 hours in each work week for purposes of p COVID-19 Sick Time under this Act unless their normal work week is less than 40 hours, in which case COVID-19 Sick Time under this Act is based upon that normal work week.

H.   COVID-19 Sick Time shall be provided to Employees for the following absences, if they are unable to work in person or telework, related to COVID-19:

    i)   Determination by a public official or public health authority having jurisdiction, a health care provider, or an Employee's Employer that the Employee's presence on the job or in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the Employee's exposure to COVID-19 or because the individual is exhibiting symptoms that might jeopardize the health of others, regardless of whether the individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

    ii)   Care of a family member of the Employee due to a determination by a public official or health authority having jurisdiction, a health care provider, or the family member's Employer that the presence of the family member on the job or in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the family member's exposure to COVID-19 or a determination by the Employer that the Employee is a danger to the health of others because they are exhibiting symptoms that might jeopardize the health of others, regardless of whether the family member has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

    iii)   An Employee's need to: (a) self-isolate and care for oneself because the Employee is diagnosed with COVID-19; (b) self-isolate and care for oneself because the employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; (c) seek or obtain medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of an illness related to COVID-19; or

    iv)   Care of a family member who: (a) is self-isolating due to being diagnosed with COVID-19; (b) is self-isolating due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; (c) needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of an illness related to COVID-19.

I.   An Employer is not obligated to provide financial or other reimbursement to an Employee upon the Employee's termination, resignation, retirement, or other separation from employment for unused COVID-19 Sick Time.

J.   Employees shall provide notice to the Employer of the need for COVID-19 Sick Time as soon as practicable.

K.   An Employer may not require that an Employee making use of COVID-19 Sick Time search for or find a replacement worker to cover the hours during which the Employee is using COVID-19 Sick Time as a condition for providing COVID-19 Sick Time.

L.   An Employee may use their COVID-19 Sick Time in the smallest increment that the Employer's payroll system uses to account for absences or use of other time.

M.   To the extent that federal or state laws require employers to provide paid leave or paid sick time related to COVID-19, Employers may substitute leave under the federal or state law for its obligations under this ordinance to the extent they coincide and the relevant federal or state law permits such concurrent use of paid leave. Employers shall be required to provide additional COVID-19 Sick Time under this Chapter to the extent that the requirements of this Chapter exceed the requirements of those laws and to the extent permitted under the federal or state law.

N.   To the extent that an Employer has adopted a policy subsequent to the March 13, 2020 Declaration of Emergency which provides its Employees with additional Paid Sick Time specifically for use during COVID-19, Employers may substitute leave under such Employer policy for the leave required under this ordinance to the extent they coincide. Employers shall be required to provide additional COVID-19 Sick Time under this Chapter to the extent that the requirements of this Chapter exceed the requirements its own COVID-19 specific Paid Sick policy.

O.   Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in Chapter 626 including specifically Section 626.09(e)(1)(a), the provisions of this Chapter 626A shall be effective immediately and may be fully enforced, without delay or grace period, by the entirety of Section 626.09.

P.   The Mayor's Office of Equity shall be empowered to promulgate guidelines and advisory documents concerning this Chapter. It shall also be empowered to work with the Allegheny County Health Department for the promulgation of any regulations required per applicable law.

Section 2: The provisions of this Chapter shall expire upon expiration of either the COVID-19 emergency disaster Declaration of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the COVID-19 emergency disaster Declaration of the City of Pittsburgh; whichever is sooner.

Section 3: If any provision of this Chapter or application thereof to any person or circumstances is judged invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the Chapter, which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this Chapter are declared severable. In no event shall this Chapter be construed as part or portion of Chapter 626 of the City of Pittsburgh Code of Ordinance.

ReedSmith

Employment Law Watch

Analysis and commentary by Reed Smith attorneys on developments in employment and labor law

Employers with Pittsburgh-based employees face new requirements to provide COVID-19-related paid sick leave

By James A. Holt and Marguerite Goglia on 8 December 2020

Posted in COVID-19/Novel coronavirus, Employment & Labor (U.S.), Pennsylvania Employment Beat, Pennsylvania Employment Beat, Sick leave, US Alert, Workplace Laws and Regulations

The City of Pittsburgh is expected to enact the new Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Ordinance (the "Ordinance"), which provides Pittsburgh employees with a new entitlement of up to **two weeks of paid time off** for qualifying absences related to COVID-19. While this legislation may be well intended, it presents potentially significant challenges for employers with Pittsburgh-based workforces that have spent the past several months adapting to what seems like an ever-evolving carousel of federal, state, and local laws enacted in response to the pandemic.

With the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) set to expire on December 31, 2020, absent an extension by the federal government, the Ordinance appears to be the City's effort to provide paid leave rights for qualifying reasons relating to COVID-19.

However, the Ordinance considerably exceeds the FFCRA in the scope of covered employers. All Pittsburgh employers with 50 or more employees (including employers whose employees normally work in the City of Pittsburgh but are now teleworking from other locations as a result of the pandemic) are covered by the Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Ordinance. By contrast, the FFCRA's coverage was limited to only employers with fewer than 500 employees. As such, many larger employers with a workforce in Pittsburgh that were excluded from the FFCRA's coverage will now immediately have to take steps necessary to provide for the requisite paid leave benefits. Further, even if an employer was subject to the FFCRA and previously took actions to provide for COVID-related paid leave, those employers should immediately update previously established policies to ensure compliance with the Ordinance.

Under the Ordinance, covered employers must provide covered employees with the following amounts of emergency paid sick leave:

- Employees who work 40 hours or more per week are entitled to 80 hours of paid sick leave.

- Employees who work fewer than 40 hours per week are entitled to an amount of paid sick leave equivalent to the greater of the amount of time they are scheduled to work or the amount of hours actually worked on average in a 14-day period.
- Employees whose schedules vary from week to week are entitled to an amount of paid sick leave equivalent to the average number of hours worked over the past 90 days of work, including hours for which the employee took leave of any type.

The Ordinance also requires covered employers to make available the full allotment of emergency paid sick leave to all covered employees for immediate use, "without any waiting period or accrual requirements."

The Ordinance applies to all employees who: (a) are working for a covered employer within the City of Pittsburgh after the effective date of the Ordinance; (b) normally work for a covered employer within the City of Pittsburgh but are teleworking from any other location as a result of COVID-19; or (c) work for a covered employer from multiple locations or from remote locations, provided that 51% or more of such employee's time is spent within the City of Pittsburgh. Covered employees must also be employed by the covered employer for at least 90 days before they are entitled to emergency paid sick leave under the Ordinance.

Significantly, the Ordinance states that the two weeks of emergency paid sick leave time provided thereunder must be **in addition to** any paid sick leave to which an employee may already be entitled under an employer's existing policies or other applicable law. There are limited exceptions, namely that employers may substitute leave provided under federal or state law and/or any of their own policies adopted after March 13, 2020, to the extent they provide equivalent COVID-related paid leave rights. However, covered employers are required to provide additional emergency paid sick leave to the extent the requirements of the Ordinance exceed the leave rights provided under the employer's policies or other applicable law. Additionally, the emergency paid sick leave time provided under the Ordinance must be **in addition to** the paid sick leave required under the Pittsburgh Paid Sick Days Act, which provides up to 40 hours of paid sick time (see our prior articles here and here). The Ordinance further provides that employees may elect to utilize emergency paid sick leave under the Ordinance before utilizing any other sick leave they may have available, provided that the reason for their absence is a qualifying reason.

To that end, covered employees will be entitled to use emergency paid sick leave under the Ordinance for any of the following qualifying reasons related to COVID-19, provided that they are unable to work in person or telework:

- Determination by a public official or public health authority, a health care provider, **or an employer** that the employee's presence on the job or in the community would jeopardize others' health because the employee is exhibiting symptoms or has been exposed to COVID-19 that might jeopardize the health of others, **regardless of whether the individual has been diagnosed with COVID-19**.
- Care of the employee's family member due to a determination by a public health official or health authority, a health care provider, or **the family member's employer** that the presence of

the family member on the job or in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the family member's exposure to COVID-19 or because they are exhibiting symptoms that might jeopardize the health of others, **regardless of whether the family member has been diagnosed with the contagious illness**.

- An employee's need to: (i) self-isolate and care for oneself because the employee is diagnosed with COVID-19; (ii) self-isolate and care for oneself because the employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; and/or (iii) seek or obtain medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of an illness related to COVID-19; or

- Care of a family member who: (i) is self-isolating due to being diagnosed with COVID-19; (ii) is self-isolating due to experiencing symptoms of COVID-19; and/or (iii) needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment if experiencing symptoms of an illness related to COVID-19.

Employers with Pittsburgh employees need to be prepared to handle leave requests under the Ordinance immediately, particularly in light of recent trends at both a local and national level. For example, many Pennsylvania businesses are returning to remote operations in light of Governor Wolf's November 23, 2020 Mitigation Order in which telework was mandated "unless impossible." Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Health recently issued an Order for Mitigation Relating to Travel mandating that all individuals quarantine following out-of-state travel, unless they receive a proper negative test result or fall under certain limited exceptions. These recent trends and developments, along with the general increase in positive COVID-19 cases reported in Pennsylvania, could predictably lead to an increase in employee absences. It is therefore crucial that employers clarify with their employees the reason for any COVID-19 related absences, and understand the types of absences for which their employees must be paid under the Ordinance.

The Ordinance will take effect immediately upon its enactment, which is expected to happen soon. Pittsburgh City Council passed the Ordinance on Tuesday, December 8, 2020, and has sent it to Mayor Bill Peduto for signature. Given that Mayor Peduto has expressed strong support in favor of the Ordinance, he is expected to sign the Ordinance in the coming days.

Accordingly, all companies with 50 or more employees in Pittsburgh should begin taking immediate action in preparation for the Temporary COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Ordinance. Reed Smith's Pittsburgh-based labor and employment team is closely monitoring developments relating to this legislation and is prepared to assist you and your business with any questions or concerns that might arise.

Employment Law Watch

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19

Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People

Updated May 28, 2021   Print

Summary of Recent Changes

Updates as of May 28, 2021   ⌃

- Updated Choosing Safer Activities infographic with new considerations for the example activity for outdoor gatherings with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people.

Choosing Safer Activities

Accessible link: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html

Unvaccinated People	Examples of Activities	Fully Vaccinated People
	Outdoor	
Safest	Walk, run, wheelchair roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	Safest
Safest	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	Safest
Safest	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people, particularly in areas of substantial to high transmission	Safest
Less Safe	Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	Safest
Least Safe	Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	Safest
	Indoor	
Less Safe	Visit a barber or hair salon	Safest
Less Safe	Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	Safest
Less Safe	Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	Safest
Least Safe	Go to an indoor movie theater	Safest
Least Safe	Attend a full-capacity worship service	Safest
Least Safe	Sing in an indoor chorus	Safest
Least Safe	Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	Safest
Least Safe	Participate in an indoor, high intensity exercise class	Safest

Get a COVID-19 vaccine

Prevention measures not needed

Take prevention measures
Wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and wash your hands.

- Safety levels assume the recommended prevention measures are followed, both by the individual and the venue (if applicable).
- CDC cannot provide the specific risk level for every activity in every community. It is important to consider your own personal situation and the risk to you, your family, and your community before venturing out.

CDC

cdc.gov/coronavirus

CS324153K

INFOGRAPHIC
If you are fully vaccinated you can start doing many things that you had stopped doing because of the pandemic.

Text Version

Key Points

The following recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings. For related information for healthcare settings, visit Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Resume activities without wearing masks or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance
- Resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel
- Refrain from testing before leaving the United States for international travel (unless required by the destination) and refrain from self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States
- Refrain from testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic, with some exceptions for specific settings
- Refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic
- Refrain from routine screening testing if feasible

For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:

- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations

Overview

Currently authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at protecting vaccinated people against symptomatic and severe COVID-19. Additionally, a growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to have asymptomatic infection or transmit SARS-CoV-2 to others. How long vaccine protection lasts and how much vaccines protect against emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants are still under investigation.

For the purposes of this guidance, people are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 ≥2 weeks after they have received the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥2 weeks after they have received a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson [J&J]/Janssen)[±]; there is currently no post-vaccination time limit on fully vaccinated status. Unvaccinated people refers to individuals of all ages, including children, that have not completed a vaccination series or received a single-dose vaccine.

At this time, there are limited data on vaccine protection in people who are immunocompromised. People with immunocompromising conditions, including those taking immunosuppressive medications (for instance drugs, such as mycophenolate and rituximab, to suppress rejection of transplanted organs or to treat rheumatologic conditions), should discuss the need for personal protective measures with their healthcare provider after vaccination.

This guidance provides recommendations for fully vaccinated people, including:

- How fully vaccinated people can safely resume activities
- How fully vaccinated people should approach domestic and international travel
- How fully vaccinated people should approach isolation, quarantine, and testing

CDC will continue to evaluate and update public health recommendations for fully vaccinated people as more information, including on new variants, becomes available. Further information on evidence and considerations related to these recommendations is available in the Science Brief.

Guiding Principles for Fully Vaccinated People

- Indoor and outdoor activities pose minimal risk to fully vaccinated people.
- Fully vaccinated people have a reduced risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2 to unvaccinated people.
- Fully vaccinated people should still get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Fully vaccinated people should not visit private or public settings if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Fully vaccinated people should continue to follow any applicable federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.

Recommendations for Indoor and Outdoor Settings

Risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection is minimal for fully vaccinated people. The risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from fully vaccinated people to unvaccinated people is also reduced. Therefore, fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Fully vaccinated people should also continue to wear a well-fitted mask in correctional facilities and homeless shelters. Prevention measures are still recommended for unvaccinated people.

Travel

Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread SARS-CoV-2 and can now travel at low risk to themselves within the United States. International travelers need to pay close attention to the situation at their international destinations before traveling due to the spread of new variants and because the burden of COVID-19 varies globally.

CDC prevention measures continue to apply to all travelers, including those who are vaccinated. All travelers are required to wear a mask on all planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

Domestic travel (within the United States or to a U.S. territory)

- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to get a SARS-CoV-2 viral test before or after domestic travel, unless testing is required by local, state, or territorial health authorities.
- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to self-quarantine following domestic travel.
- For more information, see Domestic Travel During COVID-19.

International travel

- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to get tested before leaving the United States unless required by their destination.
- Fully vaccinated air travelers coming to the United States from abroad, including U.S. citizens, are still required to have a negative SARS-CoV-2 viral test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States.
- International travelers arriving in the United States are still recommended to get a SARS-CoV-2 viral test 3-5 days after travel regardless of vaccination status.
- Fully vaccinated travelers do not need to self-quarantine in the United States following international travel.
- For more information, see International Travel During COVID-19.

Recommendations for Isolation, Quarantine and Testing

The following recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings. Guidance for residents and staff of healthcare settings can be found in the Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination.

Fully vaccinated people with COVID-19 symptoms

Although the risk that fully vaccinated people could become infected with COVID-19 is low, any fully vaccinated person who experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2 if indicated. The symptomatic fully vaccinated person should inform their healthcare provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Fully vaccinated people with no COVID-like symptoms following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Most fully vaccinated people with no COVID-like symptoms do not need to quarantine, be restricted from work, or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, as their risk of infection is low.

However, they should still monitor for [symptoms of COVID-19](#) for 14 days following an exposure.

Exceptions where testing (but not quarantine) is still recommended following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 include:

- Fully vaccinated residents and employees of correctional and detention facilities and homeless shelters.

Fully vaccinated people with no COVID-19-like symptoms and no known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

It is recommended that fully vaccinated people with no COVID-19-like symptoms and no known exposure should be exempted from routine screening testing programs, if feasible.

For Healthcare Professionals
[COVID-19 Clinical Resources](#)

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†This guidance applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for emergency use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. This guidance can also be applied to COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization (e.g. AstraZeneca/Oxford).

Previous Updates

Updates from Previous Content   ⌄

As of May 13, 2021

- Update that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance
- Update that fully vaccinated people can refrain from testing following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter

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Last Updated May 28, 2021

ReedSmith

Employment Law Watch

Analysis and commentary by Reed Smith attorneys on developments in employment and labor law

Is that a smile that I see? Pennsylvania businesses adjust reopening plans as the statewide mask mandate is scheduled to be lifted

By James A. Holt and Marguerite Goglia on 27 May 2021

Posted in COVID-19/Novel coronavirus, Employment & Labor (U.S.), Pennsylvania Employment Beat, Pennsylvania Employment Beat, US Alert, Workplace Laws and Regulations

On May 27, 2021, Pennsylvania Acting Health Secretary Alison Beam announced at a press conference that Pennsylvania's statewide masking order is slated to be lifted in its entirety effective June 28, 2021. This announcement comes on the heels of the Wolf Administration's May 4, 2021 announcement that all COVID mitigation orders in Pennsylvania would be lifted effective May 31, 2021, **except** for the masking order. The May 27 announcement reflects a change of course that sets a firm expiration on the masking requirements, regardless of the Commonwealth's vaccination rate at that time.

Pennsylvania's masking order, which was amended March 17, 2021, incorporates by reference the CDC's Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People under its exceptions from the statewide masking requirements. As such, the masking requirements under the order were effectively lifted for those who have been fully vaccinated (except for in certain limited circumstances, pursuant to CDC guidance), but still applied to those who were not fully vaccinated. At the May 27 press conference, Acting Health Secretary Beam stated that, even once the statewide masking order is lifted, Pennsylvania should continue to follow CDC guidance for wearing a mask. However, the lifting of the masking order indicates that such compliance will be recommended, but not required under state order. That certainly is an important point for which Pennsylvania employers will seek clarity as they eagerly take steps towards returning their workforce to the workplace.

It is important to note that these changes to Pennsylvania's COVID mitigation requirements, including masking, pertain only to the statewide orders. Pennsylvania businesses must comply with stricter requirements established under local law or orders, and both businesses and localities are permitted to set stricter COVID mitigation measures than those that exist at the state level.

As businesses look towards fully reopening in the coming weeks and months, it is important for them to pay close attention to any local orders that may still require masking or other mitigation efforts. Additionally,

even in the absence of a statewide or local order, businesses should remain apprised of CDC and OSHA guidance and develop appropriate workplace policies to ensure a safe and productive work environment for their personnel.

Reed Smith's Labor and Employment team is ready to assist you and your business with any questions or concerns that might arise, and will continue to closely monitor developments related to the lifting of mitigation orders in the Commonwealth.

Employment Law **Watch**

STRATEGY, DESIGN, MARKETING & SUPPORT BY   LEXBLOG

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Employment Law Watch

Analysis and commentary by Reed Smith attorneys on developments in employment and labor law

Navigating post-pandemic telework requests

By Christopher Bouriat and Mariah McGrogan on 12 April 2021

Posted in COVID-19/Novel coronavirus, Employment & Labor (U.S.), Workplace Laws and Regulations

For more than a year, many American workers have been working from home. Now, as restrictions are lifting across the country, employers are beginning to call employees back to the office. Employers may see an uptick in requests to work remotely, particularly given the popularity of working from home. In responding to such requests, employers must be mindful of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and similar state laws.

Large portions of the American workforce report that they enjoy working from home, and the pandemic has shown telework is possible.

A recent study conducted by Harvard Business School Online reveals that some employees are not interested in returning to the office. The survey showed that 81 percent of respondents either don't want to go back to the office, or would prefer a hybrid schedule (allowing them to work from home 2-3 days a week) going forward. One in three employees report that they felt that their overall performance and quality of their work had improved in the remote work environment, and the same percentage indicated that they are able to focus more at home than they are in the office.

And recent research from McKinsey & Company suggests remote work is here to stay. McKinsey analyzed more than 2,000 tasks used in 800 plus occupations, and found that 20-25 percent of the workforce in advanced economies could work from home three to five days a week without a loss in productivity. McKinsey found this was four to five times more work being performed remotely than before the pandemic.

Navigating increased requests for telework in the post-pandemic environment while mindful of the ADA and similar state laws.

Given employee hesitation and the increased prevalence of remote work, employers may see an uptick in the request to remain remote after the pandemic.

Providing the opportunity to continue remote work could help some employers in competitively recruiting and retaining employees who have a desire to work remotely. The ability to work remotely could also help

employers increase the diversity of their workforce, as the geographic location of an employee matters less in a remote environment.

Other employers may feel that it is important to return to the office as soon as possible. For these employers, they must be mindful of responding to requests to work from home fairly and equitably.

Under the ADA, employers must provide "reasonable accommodations" to employees with disabilities that allows the employee to perform the "essential functions" of their jobs, without imposing an "undue hardship" on the employer.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many employers rejected requests for telework even when sought as a reasonable accommodation. Although these employers may be allowing employees to work from home now because of the pandemic, they are not required to automatically grant requests to work from home after the workforce re-opens. As the EEOC recently explained, "the fact that an employer temporarily excused performance of one or more essential functions when it closed the workplace and enabled employees to telework for the purpose of protecting their safety from COVID-19, or otherwise chose to permit telework, does not mean that the employer permanently changed a job's essential functions, that telework is always a feasible accommodation, or that it does not pose an undue hardship."

Instead, employers must engage in the interactive process to determine whether a request for telework post-pandemic is a reasonable accommodation. During the interactive process, employers should consider how the employee performed in the work from home environment when responding to a request to continue working from home after the pandemic. In this process, employers may find it challenging to justify pre-pandemic prohibitions on telework. Applicable state laws provide similar, and sometimes broader, protections, so employers must consider those as well.

Importantly, employers are likely to see an increase in requests to stay remote from non-disabled employees, as well. Employers should be mindful of responding consistently to these requests to avoid claims of discrimination. In short, employers may face a new landscape with regard to telework with both legal and market forces challenging past practices. Accordingly, employers should review their policies and practices as they proceed toward a post-pandemic world.

Employment Law **Watch**

STRATEGY, DESIGN, MARKETING & SUPPORT BY   LEXBLOG

STATE OF REMOTE WORK

COVID EDITION

2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020 2020

How employees across the U.S. feel about working remotely in a post-COVID-19 world, their new workplace expectations and what employers need to know to recruit and retain top talent.

OWL Labs   **GWA** Global Workplace Analytics

2020 is the year the world went remote.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced organizations around the world to quickly adapt to a new remote reality, in some cases for the first time, in the largest work-from-home shift ever. We've officially fast-tracked to the future of work.

Meetings suddenly became Zoom meetings, with video calls happening 50% more than before COVID-19. Not only did people embrace remote work, they have now grown to expect it. After six months of working from home full-time, we learned that one in two U.S workers won't return to a job that doesn't offer remote work as an option.

For Owl Labs' 4th annual State of Remote Work report, we partnered with the leading remote analytics firm, Global Workplace Analytics, to learn more about the current state of remote work in 2020 and what lies ahead. We wanted to uncover remote work statistics and gather the current work from home trends to provide you with a comprehensive remote work benchmark report during COVID-19.

In this report, you'll learn:

- How people are adapting to remote work

- How companies are handling the COVID-19 guidelines for telework

- Current remote work statistics and trends

- How the new work-from-anywhere movement affects lifestyle decisions

- What leaders and companies should know to support today's employees' needs

- How key findings from 2020 compare to the Owl Labs State of Remote Work Report from 2019

OWL Labs   **Global Workplace Analytics**

EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY

Executive Summary

In this survey, we learned that **almost 70% of full time workers in the United States are working from home during COVID-19.** While working remotely, individuals are facing a more difficult balance between home life and work, adapting to new technology by leveraging video meetings, and staying productive in their home offices (or closets for 15% of survey respondents.) During COVID-19, there have been unexpected benefits and challenges — **people are saving almost $500 per month on additional expenses, however, one in five reports working more hours per week during the pandemic.**

Despite difficult circumstances for working remotely, 77% of respondents agree that after COVID-19, **having the option to work from home would make them happier.**

Leaders and managers: 80% of full-time workers expect to work from home at least three times per week after COVID-19 guidelines are lifted and companies and workspaces are able to re-open.

Remote Work Statistics and Trends During COVID-19

1. 70% of full-time workers in the U.S are working from home during COVID-19

2. 1 in 2 people won't return to jobs that don't offer remote work after COVID-19

3. 77% of respondents agree that after COVID-19, being able to work from home (WFH) would make them happier

4. 75% of people are the same or more productive during COVID-19 while working from home

5. In 2020, people are using video meetings 50% more than pre-COVID-19

6. 1 in 2 people would move if they were able to WFH all or most of the time

7. Working remotely saves 40 minutes daily on commute

8. In 2020 after COVID-19, 80% expect to work from home at least 3x/week

9. 1 in 5 people report working more during COVID-19

10. Only 20-25% of companies pay or share the cost of home office equipment, furniture, cable, chair

11. 80% agree that there should be one day a week with no meetings at all

12. 81% of respondents think their employer will support remote work after COVID-19

13. 23% of full-time employees are willing to take a pay cut of over 10% in order to work from home at least some of the time

14. 44% did not find it necessary to get dressed up (think: clothing, hair, makeup) for a video meeting

15. During COVID-19, on average, people are saving $479.20 per month

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Table of Contents

SECTION 1

State of Remote Work 2020: Who They Are - Background and Demographics

Owl Labs in collaboration with Global Workplace Analytics (GWA) surveyed 2,025 full-time workers in the United States between the ages 21 to 65 at companies with 10 or more employees. This survey data was collected in June-July of 2020.

Gender

Female: 52%

Male: 48%

Department

Other: 24%

Facilities/Ops/IT: 17%

Customer Support: 12%

Administrative: 11%

Legal/Finance: 9%

Sales: 8%

Executive/Company Leadership: 6%

Product/Engineering: 6%

Human Resources: 5%

Marketing: 2%

Role

Individual Contributor	55%
Manager	26%
Director	9%
Consultant	3%
Founder/C-Level	3%
Vice President	2%
Senior/Executive VP	2%

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Age/Generation

- Generation X: 46%
- Baby Boomers: 37%
- Millennials: 17%

How many people are working from home during COVID-19?

Remote vs. Onsite

69%
Working remote during COVID

31%
Working onsite
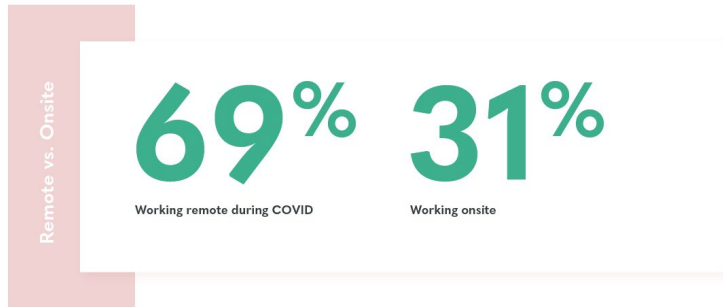
SECTION 2

Remote Work is the New Norm

If there was ever a question if your company should allow for remote work and embrace hybrid teams, the time is now. During COVID-19, most industries were forced into a work-from-home or work-from-anywhere approach, and it stuck; those working from home during the pandemic want to do so permanently 123% more after COVID-19. Motivations behind working remotely have changed a bit since 2019, with a fear of getting sick newly topping the list and avoiding the commute staying steady year over year.

In 2019, we learned that 42% of remote workers planned to work remotely more frequently than they currently were, and that more than half of on-site workers wanted to start working remotely. Now, almost 70% of people are working from home, and those who have made the switch don't want to return to the office. These remote work trends aren't going anywhere and it's up to individual organizations and teams to get up to speed on employee needs and expectations.

REMOTE WORK TREND

Working from Home is Now Essential to Happiness + Job Satisfaction

Employers and HR teams, take note: If working from home was no longer an option after COVID-19, almost 70% of respondents would be less happy and almost half would look for another role that allowed remote work.

Key Findings:

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Returning Workers

1 in 2

people won't return to jobs that don't offer remote work.

Happiness

☺

77% of respondents agree that after COVID-19, being able to WFH would make them happier.

Why People Want to Work Remotely

2020

Afraid of getting COVID-19	79%
Avoid the commute	79%
Reduce stress	74%
More time with family/ better work-life balance	72%
Increased productivity/better focus	70%

2019

Better work-life balance	91%
Increased productivity/better focus	79%
Less stress	78%
Avoiding a commute	78%
Save money/financial reasons	76%

Salary

Made over $100K in 2019:
Non-WFH 8%
WFH 26%

Made over $100K in 2020:
Non-WFH 27%
WFH 43%

More high-paying positions are working remotely.

People making high wages are working from home and making it work.

This represents a 65% increase in remote workers making over $100K.

REMOTE WORK TREND

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Remote Work Beyond COVID

If after COVID-19, respondents
were no longer allowed to work
remotely:

66% would stay but be less happy

54% would stay in their roles, but be less willing to go the extra mile

46% would look for another job where they could WFH

44% would expect a pay increase
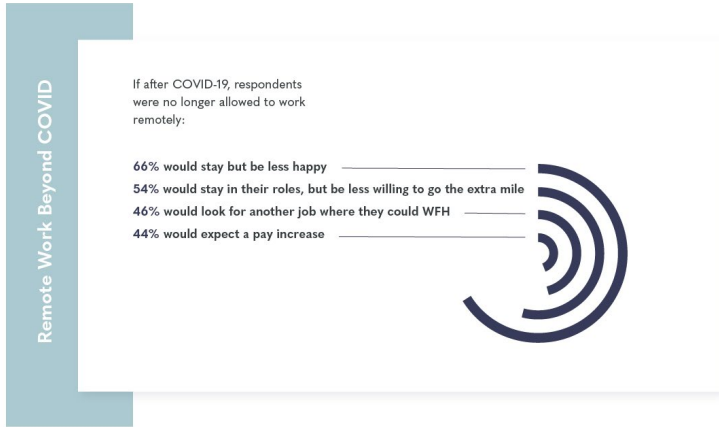
Communication Reinvented (due to COVID-19) + Deeper Connections via Video Conferencing

COVID-19 has taught us that working from the office doesn't equal productivity. With the right tools and support, people can work from anywhere. Video conferencing technology has become the standard form of communication with 60% of respondents using video more than before COVID-19, bringing new considerations for remote employees.

Almost half of survey takers are using email more or much more than they were before, suggesting in-person conversations have become emails and video calls. With even more blurred lines between work life and home life as people adjust to flexible schedules, employees are asking for more structure in this newly defined era of communication.

Remote Work Trend

REMOTE WORK TREND

Meeting Free Days are Coming

Eight out of ten full-time workers want one day a week without any meetings, and 70% agree that there should be a day each week without video meetings. People are looking for a break from having to clear out the space behind their home workstation or plan around family schedules to avoid kids in the background of team meetings. Even in 2019, remote workers were twice as likely than in-office workers to want schedule flexibility, hinting at the desire for core hours when working from home.

Key Findings:

Myths Busted

Myth: WFH is not productive.

Busted:

75%

of people are the same or more productive during COVID-19 while working from home.

Meeting Free Days

80% agree or strongly agree with the following statement:

"I think there should be one day a week with no meetings at all."

80% Agree or strongly agree

Video Meetings

In 2020, people are using video meetings 50% more than pre-COVID-19.

Core Hours

74% agree or strongly agree with this statement:

"I think we should have core hours, for example, four hours a day where we're available to colleagues and work on our own schedule the rest of the time."

74% Agree or strongly agree

Video Meeting Usage

During COVID-19:

94%

Respondents using video conferencing the same or more than they had been
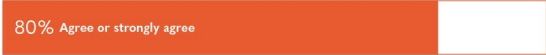
60%

Respondents using video more or much more

Video Conferencing

79% think video conferencing is at the same level or more productive than in-person meetings.

34% think video conferencing calls are more enjoyable than teleconferencing.

30% think video conferencing calls are more enjoyable than in-person.

COVID-19 Cautions

While COVID-19 has changed the way that people work, it has also contributed to overworking and brought new considerations to light for both remote workers and managers. Newly remote managers are now tasked with supporting remote team members and promoting a healthy work-life balance, all over Zoom (or your favorite video conference software).

Telecommuters Want Comprehensive Health Insurance as a Top Benefit

COVID-19 has introduced a new set of priorities for today's employee when job seeking, #1 being healthcare benefits. Employers will need to offer comprehensive healthcare plans, flexible working hours, and competitive pay to retain employees and keep up job satisfaction. Employees' top concerns for returning to the office are getting sick and wearing a mask, suggesting leaders should promote flexible remote work policies, and surprisingly lower concerns are using the elevator, sharing keyboards or work stations, and using public transit.

For those new to working from home, check out The Comprehensive Guide to Remote Work.

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Let's explore the challenges that COVID-19 has presented, and how employees are transitioning to the new normal.

Key Findings:

More Work

1 in 5

people report working more during COVID-19.

Extra Hours

📅

On average, remote employees worked an extra 26 hours each month during COVID (nearly an extra day every week).

WFH Challenges

Top challenges from WFH during COVID-19:

Interruptions/being talked over:	62%	● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
Background distractions from other participants:	59%	● ● ● ● ● ◐ ○ ○ ○ ○
Staying focused:	57%	● ● ● ● ● ◐ ○ ○ ○ ○
Video conferencing - audio quality:	57%	● ● ● ● ● ◐ ○ ○ ○ ○
Video conferencing - video quality:	56%	● ● ● ● ● ◐ ○ ○ ○ ○
Internet speed or connectivity:	52%	● ● ● ● ● ◐ ○ ○ ○ ○
Meeting setup:	50%	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

✱

* Owl Labs Tip:

Learn to pause and wait after speaking on video calls. Utilize chat features when you want to make a point and use hand signals to indicate you'd like to speak. Consider a meeting facilitator to ensure all parties are heard throughout video meetings.

Extra Hours

🩺

Health insurance is a deciding factor in employment decisions. When asked to rank benefits and perks in order of personal importance when considering new employers, 88% consider health insurance critically important.

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Benefits & Perks

The top 3 company benefits and perks respondents ranked as most important across all age groups were health insurance, total compensation, and vacation policy.

Benefits and perks in order of personal importance:

Benefit	%
Health insurance:	88%
Total compensation:	87%
Vacation policy:	76%
Flexibility in when I work:	55%
Flexibility in where I work:	49%
Employee wellness programs:	44%
Education & training reimbursement:	37%
Student loan repayment:	19%
Onsite or subsidized child care:	18%
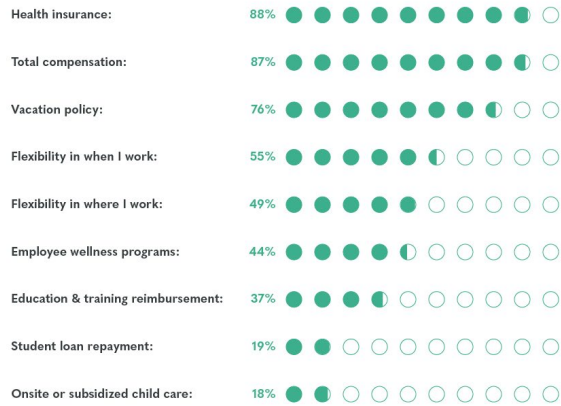
Top Concerns

Top concerns for returning to the office:

Concern	%
Getting sick:	71%
Having to wear a mask all day:	65%
Sitting in a conference room or enclosed area:	62%
Crowds getting into/out of building:	61%
Employer wanting them to come back sooner than comfortable:	56%
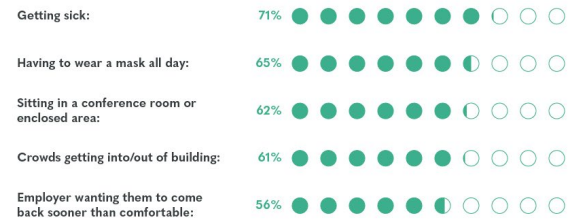
* Owl Labs Tip:

Offer remote work so your employees can feel safe and have the option to WFH.

State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

A New Era of Professionalism

Remote work has leveled the playing field when it comes to professionalism and removed the paneled C-suite offices of the past. Video conferencing during COVID-19 has broken down the barriers between CEOs and interns and NBA stars and fans alike, offering a direct connection and a removal of "closed doors."

Managers have new concerns for employee professional development in the remote landscape. Almost 60% of managers feel they are missing out on opportunities for informal leadership development and grooming of their direct reports, and other top concerns include reduced team cohesiveness, employee engagement, and a lack of engagement with coworkers.

While working remotely, employees are reporting new distractions and challenges to staying productive, which are important for managers and leaders to be aware of. There are also benefits like improved trust between management and employees, contributing to employee job satisfaction.

Some of the biggest difficulties reported by survey respondents during COVID-19 were:

Children at home: 28%

More meetings than usual: 26%

Not having worked remotely or worked from home before: 26%

* Owl Labs Tip:

Set up a specific remote work location within your home and schedule your time with those in your household to avoid interruptions or distractions during meetings. Talk to your team about setting core hours and share your schedule with your teammates so they know when you're "online."

Working from Home Builds Trust

REMOTE WORK TREND

Remote Work Trend · Remote Work Trend · Remote Work Trend

In 2019, 82% of survey respondents agreed with the statement that working remotely would make them feel more trusted at work. When we followed up and asked respondents in 2020 if they did indeed feel more trusted at work while working remotely during COVID-19, more than three quarters of respondents said yes.

* Owl Labs Tip:

Remote work gives people the autonomy they want from their role, knowing their manager trusts that they can be productive at their own pace and on their own schedule. Create goal-based performance tracking so it's not about the hours in the day but the results.

Leaders need to take special care to check in and offer remote teambuilding exercises and one-on-one development opportunities with those growing in their careers.

Remote work also allows employees to have more autonomy and feel more trusted by leadership. On the flipside, more remote employees are nervous about career progression than they were in 2019. Managers — read on to learn how you can support remote employees by having intentional, scheduled career conversations.

Key Findings:

State of Remote Work 2020 COVID EDITION

Remote Work Career Growth Considerations

Remote workers in 2019 — 68%

Not concerned working remotely will impact their career progression

Remote workers in 2019 — 23%

Fear that working remotely will impact their career progression

Remote workers in 2020 — 57%

Remote workers in 2020 — 43%

Up 87% year over year
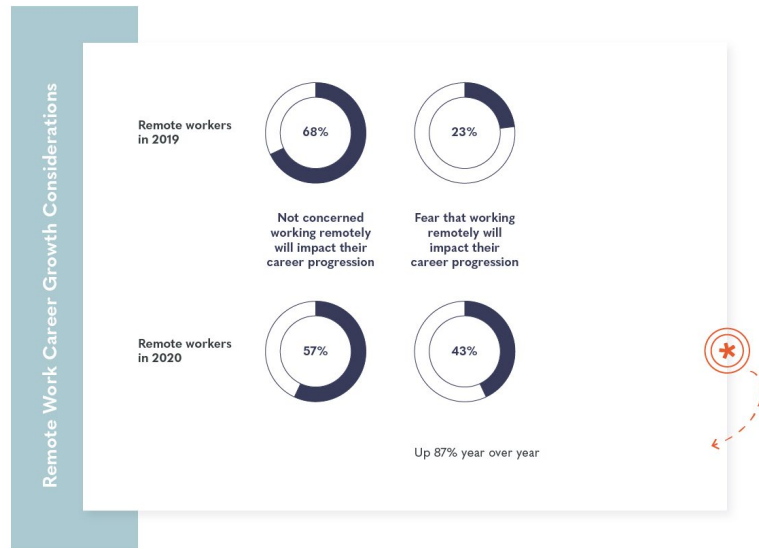
* Owl Labs Tip:

This year, there are more people new to working from home, so this suggests more are concerned about their newly remote career and its impact on growth and development. Managers, have intentional conversations with your team about professional development goals and continually check in. Check out our remote leadership guide for more advice on career conversations for remote teams.

Appearance

We won't go as far as to say professional appearance and background is no longer important but we found that 44% did not find it necessary to get dressed up (think: clothing, hair, makeup) for a video meeting.

Working Location

During COVID-19, which locations have you most often worked from?

Home office: 67%

Dining room: 49%

Couch: 49%

Bedroom: 42%

Closet: 15%
(Yes, we mean a closet)

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State of Remote Work 2020
COVID EDITION

Activity Monitoring

Understanding what employees are doing throughout their day while maintaining a level of professionalism are focuses for some companies, and when respondents were asked:

If my company started monitoring my activity as a way to track productivity while I was working at home: **1 in 3 would be unhappy but would still stay and 43% would be unhappy or leave.**

Here is what the rest said:

I would be okay with it and stay with the company:
22% ●●◑○○○○○○○

I would be okay with it as long as they used the same monitoring tools for in-office employees
36% ●●●◑○○○○○○

I would be unhappy about it but I would stay with the company:
32% ●●●◑○○○○○○

I would quit:
11% ●○○○○○○○○○
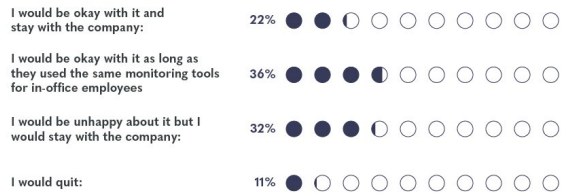
SECTION 6

Next Stop: Suburbia

Early data is showing that one in five Americans has relocated due to COVID-19. What does that mean for remote work? Many companies have recently gone on record with a newly-adopted work-from-anywhere or hybrid teams approach including Twitter, Google, Facebook, Zillow, Slack, Microsoft, Capital One (and the list continues…). With this shift and a lack of physical location on the horizon for many employees in 2020 (at least), many are leaving high rent prices behind and upsizing their city apartments to three bedroom houses in suburbia.

Remote Work Trend

REMOTE WORK TREND

People Want to Ditch the Commute

Why are people motivated to work from home? A top response from almost 80% of respondents—the commute. People save, on average, 40 minutes a day that they can spend enjoying a cup of joe, reading the morning headlines, doing a quick yoga flow, or taking the dog for a morning walk.

When asked to consider if they were no longer allowed to work from home, 44% of respondents would expect a pay increase to make up for the additional costs associated with working from the office. Additionally, when it comes to home office setups, only 20-25% of companies pay or share the cost of home office equipment and furniture.

OWL Labs

Companies seeking to recruit top candidates and retain top performers will need to start to offer home office setups or consider factoring the costs of working from an office into their compensation packages.

Here's how remote work during COVID-19 has affected lifestyle preferences of full-time workers in the U.S.

Key Findings:

Movers

1 in 2

people would move if they were able to WFH all or most of the time.

No Commute

Working remotely saves 40 minutes daily on commute.

Moving Location

When asked, if you live in an urban area and could WFH all or most of the time, where would you move?

- 50% said they wouldn't move
- 29% said they would move to a suburban area in the same general region
- 12% said a suburban area elsewhere
- 9% said a rural area
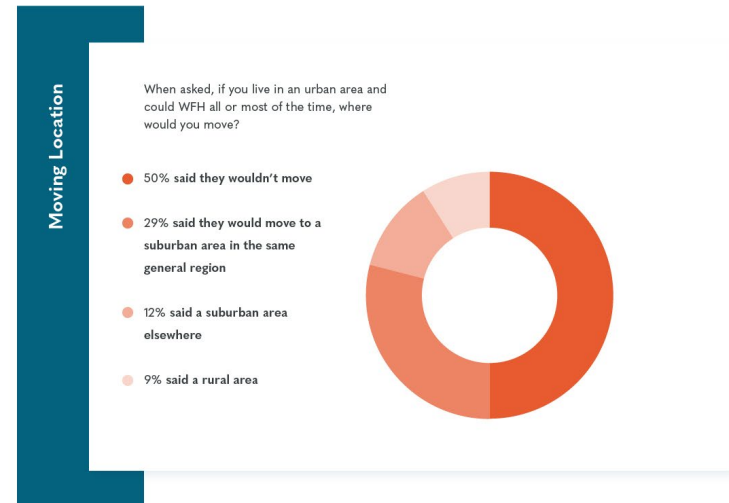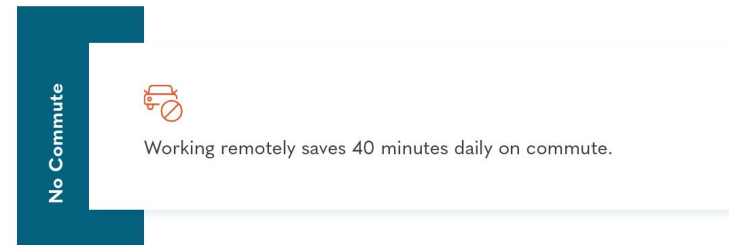
Cost of Living Adjustments

When it comes to $$, we asked: How fair do you think it is for your employer to make a cost of living adjustment (reduction in salary) if you moved to a less expensive area and worked solely at home?

71% of respondents said it would be unfair to adjust their salaries.

Here's the breakdown:

Very unfair: 40% ●●●●○○○○○○
Somewhat unfair: 31% ●●●○○○○○○○
Somewhat fair: 22% ●●◐○○○○○○○
Very fair: 7%   ◐○○○○○○○○○
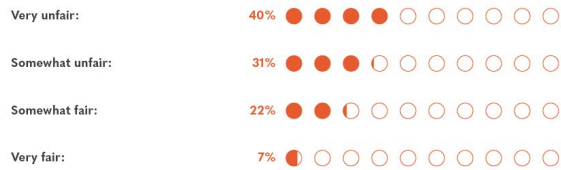
Probably not surprisingly, when you break down by individual contributors vs. managers, individual contributors find a cost reduction 79% unfair vs 67% for managers. Our takeaway: CEOs, team leaders, and managers that are responsible for business decisions see both sides, and understand the benefits (or the need) in lowering salaries.

Take a CoLA

44% would still move or consider it even if they had to take a cost of living salary adjustment or reduction.

SECTION 7

Remote Work is the Preferred Way to Work

Remote work has been a preferable choice by many when offered by their companies prior to COVID-19. When it was an option versus a necessity, many remote workers reported feeling happier, more productive and more trusted by their managers. Now that working from home became an overnight reality for most, people are realizing they do prefer this way of working. So much that 1 in 4 said they would take a pay cut of over 10% to stay working from home (WFH).

The Option to WFH Reduces Stress
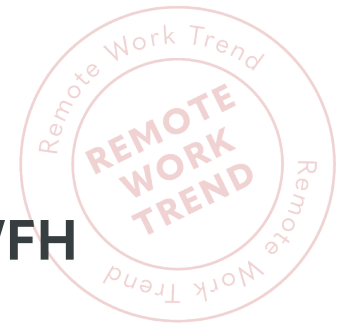
Remote work has mental health and work-life balance benefits, too. 72% of all survey respondents agreed that the ability to work remotely would make them less stressed and 77% report that working remotely would make them better able to manage work-life balance.

Read more on employee expectations when it comes to the future of work, aka hybrid companies.

Key Findings:

WFH Expectations

In 2020 after COVID-19:

92%

of people expect to work from home at least

80%

of people expect to work from home at least

1x

per week

3x

per week

WFH Pay Cuts

In order to work from home at least some of the time (we aren't even talking full time), respondents said:

In 2020:

Willing to take a pay cut of up to 5%

31% agree

-9% from 2019

Willing to take a pay cut of up to 10%
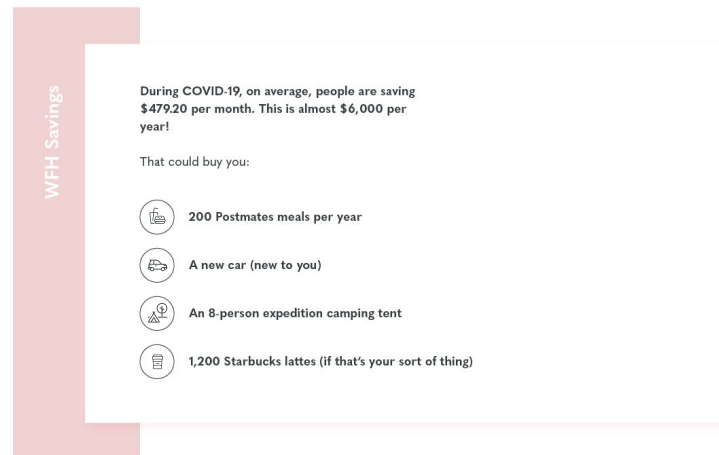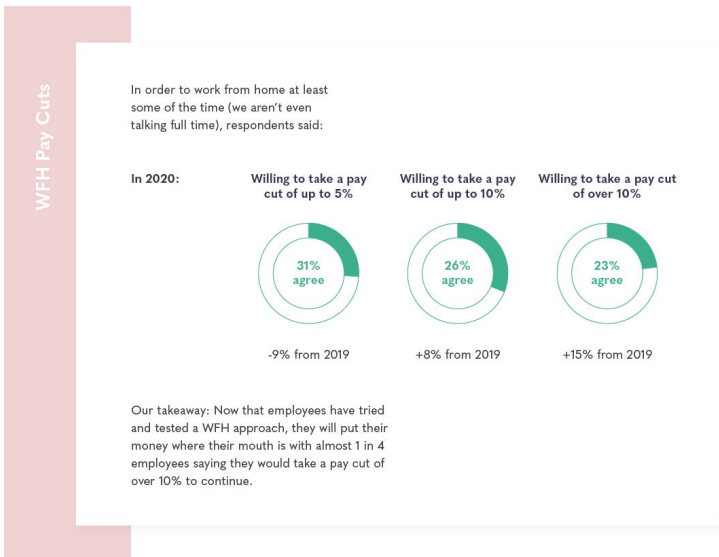
26% agree

+8% from 2019

Willing to take a pay cut of over 10%

23% agree

+15% from 2019

Our takeaway: Now that employees have tried and tested a WFH approach, they will put their money where their mouth is with almost 1 in 4 employees saying they would take a pay cut of over 10% to continue.

WFH Support

Compared to how your employer felt before COVID-19, how do you think they will feel about allowing you to work from home, at least some of the time, post-COVID-19?

81% think their employer will support it, with 29% thinking their company will support it more.

As a company gets larger in size, full-time workers think their company will be more apt to support it more:

10-50 employees:	24%
51-200 employees:	21%
201-500 employees:	24%
501-1,000 employees:	25%
1,001-5,000 employees:	27%
5,001-10,000 employees:	37%
10,001+ employees:	38%

WFH Savings

During COVID-19, on average, people are saving $479.20 per month. This is almost $6,000 per year!

That could buy you:

- **200 Postmates meals per year**
- **A new car (new to you)**
- **An 8-person expedition camping tent**
- **1,200 Starbucks lattes (if that's your sort of thing)**

SECTION 8

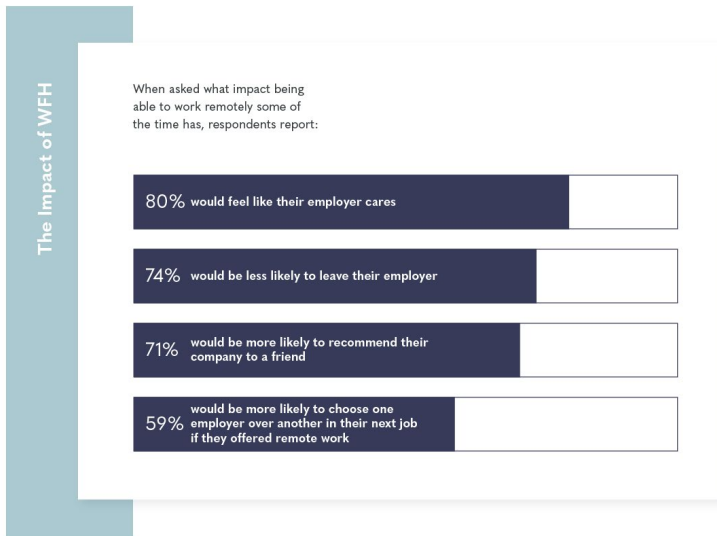# Remote Work Benefits: Employer Edition

Leaders, take note. Requiring all employees to be in an office or onsite is now a policy of the past. Employees now expect the flexibility to work where they want, and the top talent you are looking to attract is no different. What we've learned is that remote work can make or break a company's ability to recruit and retain employees.

For the 2020 job seeker, remote work should be table stakes and contributes to improving happiness, reducing stress, recommending their company to a friend, and better managing work-life conflicts.

Working From Home Improves Employee/ Employer Relations

REMOTE WORK TREND

Remote Work Trend

Key Findings:

The Impact of WFH

When asked what impact being able to work remotely some of the time has, respondents report:

80% would feel like their employer cares

74% would be less likely to leave their employer

71% would be more likely to recommend their company to a friend

59% would be more likely to choose one employer over another in their next job if they offered remote work

The Impact of WFH

Training and the right tools is a crucial component to manage effective and productive remote workers and hybrid teams. Leaders, pay attention.

When employees were asked what would make them more effective as a remote worker:

Highest

Remote training:	32%
Virtual meeting tools:	26%
Avoiding distractions:	25%

Lowest

Training for my manager:	13%
Hardware:	17%
Managing my workload:	20%

⊛ Owl Labs Tip:

During COVID-19, workers are navigating the transition from the office to the home, all while discovering the benefits and challenges of remote work. Companies and managers need to provide their teams with the tools and resources to be productive and successful in their home environment, and carry the lessons learned from remote work during COVID-19 into the business plan moving forward.

CLOSING

Conclusion

Whether you were ready for it or not, the future of work is here. Also, something we like to call the Work From Anywhere movement. Our lives will be forever changed due to COVID-19 and its implications, and what we've learned in our annual report is the time is now to embrace remote work and hybrid teams.

We now know the deep connection video can provide. We know that employee expectations have shifted. And we know that employers need to pay attention in order to maintain employee productivity, and to continue to retain and recruit top talent.

Your business now has a remote workforce with different needs, and it's time to embrace and benefit from it. It's time to rethink the way you work, and understand remote work and hybrid teams can be as productive, and is most likely here to stay.

Thanks for taking the time to read our report, we hope you found it insightful and useful.

Reach out to kristin@owllabs.com with any press inquiries and questions.

Owl Labs is a collaborative technology company dedicated to creating a better workplace and learning experience for today's hybrid workforce and virtual classroom. The company's flagship product, the award-winning Meeting Owl Pro, features a wifi-enabled, portable 360° camera, mic, and speaker with proprietary AI technology that automatically focuses on who is speaking using audio and visual cues. Learn more and join the Work and Learn From Anywhere Movement at www.owllabs.com.

OWL Labs

The Harvard Gazette

BUSINESS

Is 'business as usual' gone for good?

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Survey finds new lifestyle preferences drive new era for workplace

Michele Reynolds
HBS Online Communications
March 25, 2021

As the COVID-19 pandemic sent millions of Americans home this time last year, many professionals struggled to navigate work and household responsibilities. But a recent survey from Harvard Business

School Online shows that working online did work. In fact, many professionals even experienced advancement and growth — both on the job and at home — this year. "The past year has been difficult for everyone, but what's surprising is how well people feel they've performed at work, while at home," said Patrick Mullane, HBS Online's executive director. "Now, as we're preparing to get back to 'business as usual,' it seems professionals don't want 'business as usual.' Instead, they want flexibility from their employers to allow them to maintain the new work/home balance and productivity they have come to enjoy."

HBS Online retained Cambridge, Mass.-based market research firm City Square Associates to survey nearly 1,500 professionals who worked remotely during the COVID-19 shutdown from March 2020 to March 2021. Respondents were asked to compare this past year to the prior one.

Professional growth despite personal struggles

Despite the widespread hardships and heartbreaks of COVID-19, there is positive news. The HBS Online survey revealed that respondents experienced professional and personal wins, along with embracing many healthy — and even some unhealthy — habits.

"Many of us have Zoom fatigue," said Simeen Mohsen, HBS Online's managing director of product management. "Yet, despite not being in the office, many professionals still performed well and were even able to grow in their careers. They somehow rose to the occasion and gave it their all, both as individuals and as teams."

Want to go back to office, but with more flexibility and certain conditions

The survey showed that many professionals miss their colleagues and other aspects of being in the office, and some want to go back. But since they proved they were able to perform, and even excel, during the pandemic, they want more flexibility.

Survey highlights

Going back to work

- **81%** either don't want to go back to the office or would prefer a hybrid schedule going forward
- **27%** hope to work remotely full time
- **61%** would like to work 2–3 days a week from home
- **18%** want to go back to the office full time.
  - Parents with kids at home want to go back full time more than those without children.
  - Married people also want to go back full time more than singles.
  - On the other hand, people from the Northeast are more likely to want to stay remote.

Conditions for

going back

51% are uncomfortable going back to the office until they're fully vaccinated

71% are hesitant to go back until everyone is fully vaccinated

54% expect social distancing — everyone is seated at least 6 feet apart and required to wear masks

Professional grow: Excelled at work ○

98% of professionals working from home kept their jobs

1-in-3 felt both their overall performance and quality of work was better than the year prior

1-in-3 were actually able to better focus on work from home

Gelled with co-workers — even while remote ○

1-in-2 said the following did not change:

- Collaboration with co-workers

- Support from co-workers

- Trust in leadership

Developed healthy habits ○

59% made health a priority

70% prepared healthier meals at home

50% read for fun

36% napped more

16% adopted a dog or pet

68% spent more time with their pets

44% exercised more

45% spent more time doing outdoor activities

31% took on a new hobby

Acquired bad habits ○

75% binge-watched TV shows or movies more

1-in-3 gained weight (10+ lbs.)

1-in-3 drank more

31% took recreational drugs more

14% bathed less

For more information about the survey, to download infographics, or to find tips to help business leaders navigate the changing workplace, visit the HBS Online website.

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

COVID-19

IF YOU ARE FULLY VACCINATED

Find new guidance for fully vaccinated people. If you are not vaccinated, find a vaccine.

Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Updated Apr. 2, 2021   Print

> ⚠️ The COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation and CDC guidance is updated frequently.

General

Check CDC's Domestic Travel or International Travel pages for the latest recommendations for fully vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers.

Can people who have recently recovered from COVID-19 travel?   ⌄

If you had COVID-19 in the past 3 months, follow all requirements and recommendations for fully vaccinated travelers except:

- You can show documentation of recovery from COVID-19 instead of a negative test result before boarding an international flight to the United States.
- You do NOT need to tested 3-5 days after travel to the United States unless you have symptoms of COVID-19.

We know that people can continue to test positive for up to 3 months after they had COVID-19 and not be infectious to others.

What if I recently traveled and am sick?   ⌄

See CDC's website What to Do If You Are Sick.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19 when using different types of transportation?   ⌄

See CDC's website Protect Yourself When Using Transportation.

Domestic Travel

Can traveling to visit family or friends increase my chances of getting and spreading COVID-19? ⌄

Yes. CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated, because travel increases your chance of getting and spreading COVID-19. If you are not fully vaccinated and must travel, follow CDC's Domestic Travel or International Travel recommendations for unvaccinated people.

Am I required to quarantine after domestic travel? ⌄

CDC does not require travelers to undergo a mandatory federal quarantine. However, CDC recommends that **unvaccinated** travelers self-quarantine after travel for 7 days with a negative test and for 10 days if they don't get tested.

Check CDC's Domestic Travel pages for the latest recommendations for fully vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers.

Follow all state and local recommendations or requirements.

International Travel

How does CDC determine the COVID-19 Travel Health Notice Level of a destination? ⌄

CDC reviews data reported to the World Health Organization daily to determine a destination's COVID-19 Travel Health Notice level. There are a few factors that CDC considers when determining the level of a destination. To find out more about the COVID-19 Travel Health Notice levels, visit How CDC Determines the Level for COVID-19 Travel Health Notices.

These notices offer travel recommendations based on the level of COVID-19 in a destination. To learn more about COVID-19 travel recommendations for a specific destination, visit COVID-19 Travel Recommendations by Destination.

How often are international travel recommendations related to COVID-19 updated? ⌄

Recommendations are updated weekly. CDC reviews data reported to the World Health Organization daily to determine a destination's COVID-19 Travel Health Notice level and makes appropriate level changes once a week. To find out more about the COVID-19 Travel Health Notice levels, visit How CDC Determines the Level for COVID-19 Travel Health Notices.

What restrictions do other countries have in place that might affect US travelers? ⌄

Check with your destination's Office of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Health or the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Country Information ☐ for details about entry requirements and restrictions for arriving travelers.

Does CDC require COVID-19 testing before coming to the United States? ⌄

All air passengers coming to the United States, **including U.S. citizens and fully vaccinated people**, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result no more than 3 days before travel or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 3 months before they board a flight to the United States.

Does CDC require quarantine after international travel? ⌄

CDC does not require travelers to undergo a mandatory federal quarantine. However, CDC recommends that **unvaccinated** travelers self-quarantine after travel for 7 days with a negative test and for 10 days if they don't get tested.

Check CDC's International Travel pages for the latest recommendations for vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers.

Follow all state and local recommendations or requirements.

Air or Cruise Travel

Can flying on an airplane increase my risk of getting COVID-19? ⌄

Yes. Air travel requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes. However, social distancing is difficult on crowded flights, and you may have to sit near others (within 6 feet), sometimes for hours. This may increase your risk for exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

Do I have to wear a mask when I travel? ⌄

Masks are required on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

What happens if there is a sick passenger on an international or domestic flight? ⌄

Under current federal regulations, pilots must report all illnesses and deaths to CDC before arriving to a U.S. destination. According to CDC protocols, if a sick traveler has a contagious disease that is a risk to others on board the airplane, CDC works with local and state health departments and international public health agencies to contact exposed passengers and crew.

Be sure to give the airline your current contact information when booking your ticket so you can be notified if you are exposed to a sick traveler on a flight.

For more information, see the CDC webpage Protecting Travelers' Health from Airport to Community: Investigating Contagious Diseases on Flights.

Should I delay going on a cruise? ⌄

Yes. CDC recommends that all travelers avoid all cruise ship travel worldwide, including river boats. Reports of COVID-19 on cruise ships highlight the risk of infection to cruise ship passengers and crew. Like many other viruses, COVID-19 appears to spread more easily between people in close quarters aboard ships. At this time, cruise ship passenger operations remain suspended in U.S. waters under CDC's Framework for Conditional Sailing Order.

For information about traveling in the United States: Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Last Updated Apr. 2, 2021

What is Office Hoteling? Why Your Workspace Needs It

May 6, 2021 | Tags: Coworking

Share

Office hoteling is a rising trend in professional office management. Depending on the implementation, office hoteling has provided Coworking and shared workspaces with greater mobility, productivity, flexibility, and efficiency. It also affords members the ability to create teams more easily, within proximity.

What is office hoteling?

In short, office hoteling is the elimination of assigned seating in a workspace which allows members to reserve office space for whatever suits the type of work they need to do, on a daily basis. This works well, given the increased dependency on remote working.

Office hoteling affords workspaces with greater demand, better networking, and a more accessible telecommuting experience. Here is why we recommend it as a practice for your Coworking or shared space.

Office Hoteling Generates Demand

Think about the concept that airline companies don't expect to fill every seat on every

flight. Car rental companies don't expect every car to be taken off the lot. Workspace operators, however, see empty desks as waste rather than a fluctuation in demand. Office hoteling allows for operators to give the consistent image of having a professionally run operation with spaces constantly in demand.

Furthermore, instead of offering a permanent desk to a member who spends a significant amount of time working from home, hoteling allows for operators to reduce the square footage needed to support their workforce. This can allow for a reconfiguration of the workflow as well as open spaces for on-site employees to use for collaboration.

Reduced square footage can also equate to less spending on rent and utilities, eventually leading to more capital leftover. By using a sophisticated workspace management software, you can also observe and accurately measure the usage of your workspace by the exact square footage.

Better Networking

By allowing members to work from various locations, it enables for freedom to collaborate with other members naturally. This concept is further enhanced when you've got multiple workspaces involved.

We know Coworking spaces incubate creativity. Having the flexibility that allows for workers to go from assigned space to open space freely can bring people together and give them the space they need to work through a seamless process. By removing the structure of a traditional office, your members are afforded the choice to take a different approach daily.

You can also virtually eliminate the need for an assigned desk by affording members the benefits of a smart office experience. These benefits include cloud document storage as well as communication and messaging services designated to keep a member in the loop regardless of their location.

Improved Morale

Empty space can also be used to disengage and take breaks. If your Coworking space lacks social and recreational space, you can use times of little office reservation to plan a big event or organize a special occasion for all members to unwind. We've talked about some of the best ideas for hosting events and ideas for member engagement.

Another reason why hoteling improves morale is that it creates an opportunity for members to have their say in how an open space can be laid out, with teams and individuals providing input on how to make space run best.

Engaged employees build loyalty to your workspace with the belief they are working toward a collective benefit. This increases productivity, collaboration, as well as interdepartmental cooperation.

Some corporations are also turning to hoteling as a means to reduce a power struggle. Nobody would have a guaranteed ideal office or be assigned a desk with a view. Instead, these corporate spaces, used by big institutions such as Citrix, allow employees to reserve spaces on a first come first serve basis. If that just so happens to be the corner office, so be it.

Plan for Peak Days

Be careful with hoteling on peak demand days in your space. Make sure that the flexible areas can be delegated for office space when you're reaching capacity.

Someone in your staff should also be able to serve as a 'keeper' of sorts. They'll make sure the spaces are being used for their intended purpose and when peak times occur, they can maintain order, especially when there is a large number of desks.

There are more benefits for both members and operators afforded by office hoteling. We recommend this practice as it's proven to increase office productivity, networking, as well as morale.

How Office Hoteling Helps with Employee Reentry During the COVID Era

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, embracing office hoteling can be the best solution to a safe and efficient workspace for your members. However, for this to work it is essential to have a centralized booking and management platform. With a centralized coworking platform not only can you manage and assign workspaces to ensure social

distancing, but you can better plan the available spaces for optimal space utilization. You will have access to each member's entry and exit times and the common work areas used, so you can better plan your workspace.

Yardi Kube

To further implement the best practices of desk hoteling given the COVID-19 situation, make sure to organize the space in a way in which desks are numbered and easy to find having only the seat number from the reservation. Also, providing your members with easy access to amenities and the facility, health surveys and contact tracing will allow you to provide them with top user experience and satisfaction, as well as monitoring the safety and health in the workspace.

For more information on how the Yardi Kube platform can transform the experience of working in a shared or flexible space environment, please click here.

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