Uniting for Recovery:

RETURN TO WORK *Guide*

UPDATED FOR 2021

In partnership with:

MISSOURI2030
An Agenda to Lead

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MISSOURI CHAMBER

FOUNDATION

Introduction

Missouri businesses have played a critical role in the effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. As local and statewide restrictions were put into place, many employers drastically altered their operations with some closing their doors completely.

As the response continues, many employers across the state are working to develop strategies to enable them to reopen and stay open safely. Based on best practices, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry is providing the following guidelines and suggestions to assist businesses in their efforts to create safe workplaces for their employees and customers.

We also strongly encourage employers to closely follow the recommendations published by Gov. Mike Parson, the State of Missouri and local health officials.

Additionally, as businesses establish procedures for operations, we strongly recommend employers start by reviewing the comprehensive guidance available from the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Please keep in mind as vaccination rates increase some of the policies and procedures at your workplace will be able to be modified. It is recommended to continue practicing hygiene and sanitation measures. Continue to encourage vaccinations to ensure workplaces can return to normal. Note that some of the recommendations in this document may not apply to those fully vaccinated.

Links:

https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/safework

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html

Reduce the risk
of transmission

CDC mask guidance NEW!

Safe | Less safe | Least safe

Outdoor | Indoor

UNVACCINATED PEOPLE	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES	VACCINATED PEOPLE
NO MASK	Walk, run, wheelchair roll, or bike outdoors with members of your household	NO MASK
NO MASK	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated family and friends	NO MASK
MASK	Attend a small, outdoor gathering with fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people	NO MASK
MASK	Dine at an outdoor restaurant with friends from multiple households	NO MASK
MASK	Attend a crowded, outdoor event, like a live performance, parade, or sports event	NO MASK

Outdoor | **Indoor**

UNVACCINATED PEOPLE	EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES	VACCINATED PEOPLE
NO MASK	Visit a barber or hair salon	MASK
NO MASK	Go to an uncrowded, indoor shopping center or museum	MASK
MASK	Attend a small, indoor gathering of fully vaccinated and unvaccinated people from multiple households	MASK
MASK	Go to an indoor movie theater	MASK
MASK	Attend a full-capacity worship service	MASK
MASK	Sing in an indoor chorus	MASK
MASK	Eat at an indoor restaurant or bar	MASK

Source: CDC
Vaccinated individuals are recommended to wear masks indoors in areas where COVID transmission is considered to be substantial or high.

- Establish new safe-at-work policies, procedures, and/or guidelines. Send them to all employees and/or post them in a conspicuous location. Revise policies as needed to take into account the level of disease transmission in your community.

  - Policies and procedures should include information on Personal Protective Equipment, disinfection measures, social distancing protocol, on-site health screening, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, self-quarantining and return-to-work policies, visitors and contractors screening, signage, time-off options and all other COVID-19-related safe workplace changes.

  - If returning to work, training and orientations should be done on day one.

  - Train employees on frequent hand washing, properly covering coughs and sneezes and refraining from touching the face.

  - NEW! Reference CDC's quarantine recommendations regularly to modify your workplace's policies, procedures, and guidelines on quarantine protocols. COVID-19: When to Quarantine | CDC

continued

- ## Promote personal hygiene.
    - If workers do not have access to soap and water for hand washing, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
    - Provide disinfectants and disposable towels workers can use to clean work surfaces.
    - Provide tissues for coughing and sneezing.

- ## Strongly encourage the use of masks in the workplace.

    NEW!
    - Remind employees and customers that the CDC recommends individuals to continue wearing face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Wearing a face covering, however, does not replace the need to practice social distancing.

    NEW!
    - New guidance urges all individuals to wear a mask indoors in public, regardless of vaccination status, to maximize protection from virus variants and prevent possibly spreading it to others, if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.

- ## Clean and sanitize surfaces frequently.
    - Make wipes, sanitizer and cleaning products widely accessible throughout workplaces. Alcohol-based cleaning products should have 70% alcohol content or higher for effectiveness.
    - Clean break rooms and common touch areas (doorknobs, light switches, phones, fridge handles, etc.) after each shift.
    - Thorough cleaning of ALL shared surfaces throughout the facility at least once every 24 hours. This includes common spaces like bathrooms, conference rooms, lunchrooms, etc.
    - Shut down production in the area where a COVID-19 affected employee worked (i.e. department, line, station) to conduct cleaning, as well as shut down and clean common spaces like bathrooms, conference rooms and lunchrooms once notification of potential COVID-19 spread is suspected.
    - Provide masks, shields, gloves, shoe coverings, coveralls, etc. if appropriate and available.

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- Provide touch-free solutions.

    - Touch-free time clocks.

    - Touch-free trash bins.

    - Foot operated door pulls

    - Individual water containers for workers instead of large water coolers.

Workplace signage

- Post internal signage that can be used to alert or remind employees about guidelines, expectations and responsibilities.

- Post external signs on doors alerting visitors to restrictions on entry and movement in and around facility as well as any applicable guidelines and expectations.

Social distancing at work
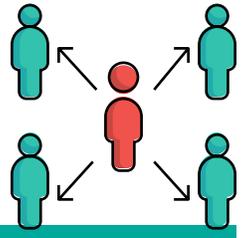
- Offer work-from-home options for all employees who can perform duties remotely.

- Change shifts.
    - Stagger shifts and start times to maximize distancing.
    - Allow 30-minute buffers between shifts if possible so that employees don't come into contact during transition.
    - Cross-train, so that teams can better stagger shifts.

- Provide visual markers on floors for six-foot distancing, per CDC guidance.

- Restrict movement between departments and/or functions (e.g. don't allow traffic between production and office workspaces).

- Stagger breaks and lunch schedules.

- Conduct phone/email/virtual meetings instead of in-person meetings, even when at office.

- If in-person meetings are necessary, limit meetings to no more than 10 individuals, provided appropriate spacing is possible.

- Hold meetings in large spaces where people can spread out at six-foot intervals.

- Space out desks and work stations; construct temporary walls between workstations to accommodate appropriate distancing.

Working with vendors
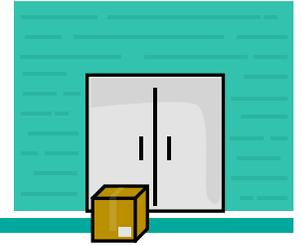
- Request health and travel assessments for vendors/contractors coming on-site.

- Separate contractors and vendors from the employees (have them use separate bathrooms and entrances if possible).

- Prohibit nonessential vendors and deliveries from entering facility.

- Require deliveries to be dropped outside facility door, eliminating vendors from entering facility.

- Maintain a contact log for all persons coming into an office or manufacturing plant registering their date, time, name, contact information, person they are meeting with, and if they have had COVID-19 or been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who has.

Customer service

NOW SERVING 99

- Offer curbside delivery instead of in-store pick-up.

- Provide on-site services to customer's facility once their business is closed (after hours).

- Offer drive-through service only.

- Add plastic barriers/shields at registers.

- Ask customers to stay in their vehicles in parking lot while they wait.

- Conduct virtual sales calls.

- Limit the number of customers in the facility to ensure appropriate distancing, along with visual markers on floors for six-foot distancing, per CDC guidance.

Travel considerations
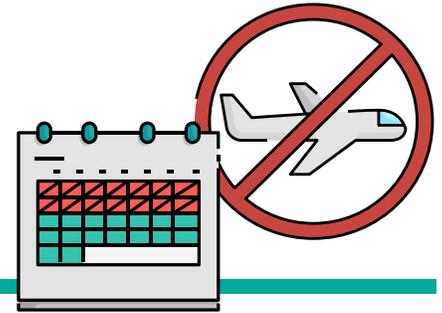
- Fully vaccinated employees do <u>not</u> need to self quarantine following domestic or international travel.

  NEW!
  - Monitor COVID-19 transmission levels in your destination before travelling.
  - You do NOT need to get tested *before* leaving the United States unless your destination requires it.
  - You will need to show a negative test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding an international flight to the United States.
  - You should get tested 3-5 days *after* international travel as a general precaution.

- Limit non-essential travel and require a two-week quarantine for unvaccinated employees who return from outside of the country or a domestic COVID-19 hotspot.

- Require a two-week quarantine for unvaccinated employees traveling more than 100 miles from facility.

- Please remind employees that everyone, including vaccinated individuals, must wear masks on air, rail, and bus transportation systems as is required by the federal government.

- Do not travel if experiencing symptoms or tested positive.

Employee Health

- Conduct temperature or employee wellness checks at the start of shifts to ensure employees do not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms.

NEW!

- Fever > 100.4
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing
- Muscle or body aches

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste/smell
- Congestion
- Sore throat

- Create a master schedule for all employees that shows when people may come in contact with others; use this for contact tracing in the event of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 exposure.

- Outline in written policies/guidelines a response plan for employees who report or demonstrate symptoms at work, have recently been at work and tested positive or have been in contact with confirmed COVID-19 case, or have not recently been at work but have tested positive or have been in contact with confirmed COVID-19 case.

- Ask employees about their health status before they return to work from a sick leave (even if they were out with a headache); require certification by a health care professional of ability to safely return to work (particularly for those noted above).

- Offer a variety of leave options for employees who may have to miss work because of a COVID-19-related reason.

- Encourage sick employees to stay home.

- Protect employees at a higher risk for severe illness with supportive policies and procedures.

Ongoing Communication
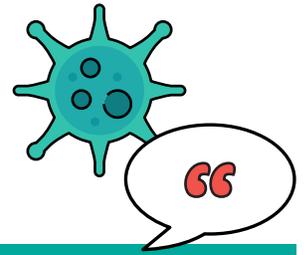
- Educate employees and management to carry out the protocols. Provide clear direction on employee roles and responsibilities, and have *ongoing* communications as guidelines may change frequently.

  - Post signs on doors to instruct customers/visitors on safety protocols.
  - Provide remote workers with a list of free resources to stay healthy and active at home (i.e. ergonomic tips, stress-relief tools, fitness resources).
  - Provide pre-recorded safety training videos for customer-facing activities.
  - Maintain an up-to-date repository on the company's shared network that allows employees to access all COVID-19 documents, resources and company protocol.
  - Ensure employees are informed about potential benefit lapses and help them access any available assistance programs.
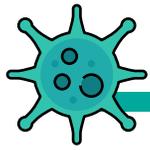
Vaccinating your workforce

As COVID-19 vaccines are distributed across Missouri, employers need to prepare for how they will handle vaccinations among their staff members.

Consider how they communicate about the vaccine to their employees.

While some employers might consider requiring employees to receive the vaccine — and there are some indications that this is allowable under the law — it's unclear how the courts will ultimately view vaccination requirements. This is a very unique situation and there is very little case law that would guide how a court might rule if an employee challenged a required vaccination.

This has led to a variety of opinions on how far employers can go to have their staff members vaccinated. Given this unique situation, many employers are choosing to adopt policies that highly recommend, but don't require, vaccination by employees.

As always, employers must be aware of existing exceptions to vaccination policies including making accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs and ADA disabilities.

Employers should try to provide a reasonable accommodation if an employee makes a request not to receive the vaccination for either above reason.

Employers can take steps to mitigate the risk of the unvaccinated employee potentially spreading COVID-19 in the workplace, but should not automatically bar the employee from the workplace.

Employers should create a written document on their recommendations about staff members being vaccinated for COVID-19 and clearly communicate those recommendations to employees. They should also be prepared to evaluate requests for accommodations.

This is an evolving situation and employers should continue to watch for new workplace guidance as the vaccines become more available.
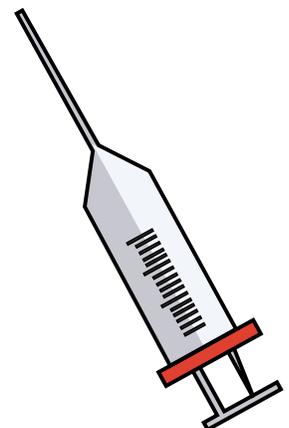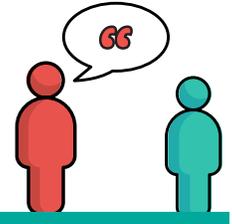
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We suggest employers encourage their employees to become vaccinated. Here are some helpful tips:

Effective messaging angles

- **"Do Your Part"** — Point out others who have already been vaccinated. An example message could be, *Think of your coworkers, friends and family – they're taking action.*

- **"Do It For Them"** — Vaccination isn't just for you — it's to make your whole community safer for the people you care about. Example: *Protect your friends, family, and loved ones.*

- **"Get Back to the Things You Love."** — We're all tired of wearing masks and isolating! Example: *Vaccinations can help us get back to the activities we love, spending time with family and friends, traveling and going to events.*

- **"Vaccination is the safest way to build immunity."** — Getting vaccinated is a much safer way to build protection than contracting COVID-19. Example: *COVID-19 can have serious, long-term or life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get infected, you could spread the disease to friends, family and others around you.*

- **"Freedom to Travel and Attend Events."** — You should absolutely emphasize that the main benefit of getting vaccinated is to avoid getting sick and spreading a deadly illness. However, vaccination will also be a necessity for participation in some activities. Example: *Vaccination may be required in the future for domestic or international travel — or possibly even to attend concerts or sporting events.*

- **NEW!** **"We can't afford another widespread shutdown."** — Getting vaccinated helps to reduce the levels of community spread and economic harm from COVID.

- **NEW!** **"We would rather you be out for a day, or two, to get a vaccine rather than be out for much longer if you get COVID."** — Some are concerned about any side effects from the vaccine but it helps to emphasize that side effects will be far less disruptive/damaging than the effects of contracting COVID.

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DOs and DON'Ts

- **DON'T** start or engage in debates.

- **DO** acknowledge that it is normal to have questions and concerns.

- **DO** refer to the people behind the vaccine — use vocabulary like "the scientists", "the health and medical experts", and "the researchers."

- **DON'T** use vague, impersonal-sounding vocabulary like "the science" and "pharmaceutical companies."

- **DON'T** use judgmental language such as, "*I can't believe you haven't gotten the vaccine yet!*"

- **DO** acknowledge that side effects are common. They are a normal sign that the body is building immunity and they should go away within a few days. It is NOT possible to get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

- **DO** make sure they know that the vaccine is free, even if they don't have health insurance. The federal government is providing vaccines free of charge to everyone living in the U.S.

- **DO** encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider. Everyone should be comfortable with their decisions and their doctor can help alleviate their worries.

- **DO** keep it simple. If people are overwhelmed with too much messaging, it can lead to decision paralysis and make them less likely to get the shot. Provide concise, easily understood information about why, how and where to get vaccinated.

Practical Action Steps

- **Communicate what your organization's specific commitment is to employees regarding vaccines.** Example: *[ORGANIZATION] is committed to helping you get the facts about COVID-19 vaccines. We also want to make it easy for you to get vaccinated. Here are some ways [ORGANIZATION] is planning to support you: _____. Then you can fill in the blank with the actions from below that you are taking, or any of your own ideas.*

- **Lead by example.** Have organization leaders in your organization show off their vaccine card or share why they're planning to get vaccinated as soon as possible. Experts have

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found that employees seeing their leader(s) getting vaccinated in front of them at work is extremely effective in addressing vaccine hesitancy in the workplace.

- Be flexible with your HR policies. Allow employees to take a couple of paid hours off to get the vaccine and offer paid sick leave to those who experience side effects to help them recover.

- Share [Missouri's vaccine website](), which offers vaccine FAQs and vaccine appointment registration.

- Host a vaccination event at your workplace to make it easy and convenient for employees to get vaccinated. Express interest in having a free clinic come to your workplace using this simple one-page form.

- Use your organization's social media to share your messaging.

- Bring up the subject in a staff meeting using some of the Conversation Starters found in our full [Employers' Guide to Encouraging Employee Vaccination.]()

- Ask vaccinated employees to share their story with coworkers — why they got the vaccine, how simple the process is and how they've experienced no side effects beyond the typical few days, if applicable.

- Offer inoculated employees "Vaccinated!" stickers for their ID badges, or buttons that could be pinned to a shirt. People tend to like to do what their social circle is doing, and the visual reminder can help.

- Distribute informational handouts for employees to take home and share with family.

- If your workplace is at least 70% vaccinated, apply for an official [COVID Stops Here]() designation. Once approved, workplaces receive signage and a media kit to help promote their status to their community and encourage others to join them.

For more example communication view our [Employers' Guide to Encouraging Employee Vaccination.]()