



# RETURNING TO A NEW NORMAL

Guidance on Transitioning  
Employees Back to Work



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Now that the President has begun to release the guidelines for opening up the country, it is important for employers to begin discussions on opening up their businesses and/or returning to their standard operations.

The Federal Government Guidelines for “Opening Up America Again” can be reviewed by visiting <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#criteria>. The approach outlines three different phases with “gated” criteria that will be implemented in an effort to keep Americans safe and healthy.

The phased approach is implementable on a statewide or county-by-county basis at the Governors’ discretion. Because of this, we will see states opening up at different rates.

It is important for employers to develop and implement policies (where necessary) and in accordance with Federal, State and local regulations on:

- Social distancing
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Temperature Checks
- Sanitation
- Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
- Business Travel
- Attendance

Your Sheakley HR Team Member can help you in the development of these policies.



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## PROTECTING THOSE WHO ARE MOST AT RISK

In the first two phases of Opening Up America Again, vulnerable employees should continue to shelter in place and tele-working is advisable based on the needs of your business. Vulnerable employees include those that are “high-risk” of contracting COVID-19 as outlined by the CDC which include:

- People 65 years and older
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
  - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - People who have serious heart conditions
  - People who are immunocompromised (cancer, smoking, bone marrow, organ transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV or AIDS, use of immune weakening medications)
  - People with severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
  - People with Diabetes
  - People with Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
  - People with liver disease
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility



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## CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CRAFTING YOUR STRATEGY

Now more than ever is a time for team work amongst Managers and other Leaders within your organization. Work with your leadership team to come up with a plan for employees to return back to work safely. Items to consider include:

- Can your employees return to work in phases?
- Identify who your most essential employees are that may need to return to work first.
- Identify what IT assistance will be needed when bringing employees back.
- Identify employees that will need to be out on continued leave due to school/daycare closures.
- Identify those employees that will need tele-work accommodations due to being vulnerable/high-risk.
- Will your organization be able to follow social-distancing guidelines?
- Will your organization be able to supply necessary hygiene/sanitation products?
  - Hand sanitizers, tissues, sanitizing wipes
- Set guidelines for essential versus non-essential business travel.
- Will you require/allow employees to wear PPE's? Keep in mind that PPE's may be mandated by Federal, State or local governments.
- Will you be checking temperatures of employees prior to their entry into your organization? If so:
  - Set temperature criteria to send employees home.
  - Identify who will be administering the temperature checks.
  - Identify the individual who will have access to the confidential information.



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## PLANNING FOR PAYROLL ADJUSTMENTS

For those employers that have laid off or furloughed employees and have continued making benefit premium payments for employees, it is important that you let your Sheakley HR and Payroll team know when employees are coming back to work. When bringing these employees back, Sheakley will need to know the following information:

- Do we need to collect the missed benefit premium payments from the employee?
- If we are collecting the missed benefit premiums, over how many pay periods would you like us to spread out the missed premiums?
  - The premium payments can be spread out over multiple payrolls so employees are not taking such a large hit on their first paycheck(s) back to work.
- Many employers have made salary adjustments and/or have stopped their 401(k) matching contributions. You will want to consider when/if you will be readjusting the salaries or reinstating the 401(k) match contribution. It is very important that you notify your Sheakley HR Team of the updates.



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## ENSURE EMPLOYEE INFORMATION IS UP-TO-DATE

There is no required “new hire” documentation that will need to be sent to Sheakley when you have employees returning from a layoff or furlough. The USCIS (United States Citizenship and Immigration Services) states that if there was a mutual understanding that the employee would return to work, then the I-9 does not need to be reverified. It is important that employers ask whether or not any changes have taken place with the employee during their temporary leave. Examples of these changes include:

- Address changes
- Banking information changes
- W-4 and state tax form updates

**We know that this is a very challenging time and we are here to help you through it!**

Please do not hesitate to reach out should you need additional guidance or have questions/concerns.