



POST-COVID-19 FACILITY RE-ENTRY GUIDE



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GUIDELINES FOR USE

Intended Audience

This guide is intended to support organizations with COVID-19 re-entry and re-opening planning, specifically with the considerations needed to return to facilities and resume operations. It is presented here as a guide and not a definitive solution. The details presented are generic enough to apply to most facilities. There are specific notes included for unique facilities such as laboratories and medical facilities, however, the intent is to be applicable to most economic sectors.

The guide is applicable whether the organization owns, rents, leases, or is co-located with other entities. It is applicable to single- and multi-building facilities. It is also applicable to those organizations who operate in single and/or multiple jurisdictions; note: if the organization operates in multiple jurisdictions, ensure all actions are compliant with the regulations and direction of the jurisdiction where the facility being re-opened is located.

Purpose

Following any major disaster, organizations need to critically evaluate when and how to re-enter damaged or shuttered facilities. While how to evaluate and re-enter facilities following a fire, flood, or hurricane when there has been visible damage to structures is understood, the current pandemic presents several different challenges and changes in processes and systems. We are adapting to a “new normal for now” system of operations and must prepare our people and facilities accordingly.

Applicable Hazards

The guide is specifically aimed at supporting post-COVID-19 facility re-entry planning however, the contents are applicable under most post-disaster contexts. COVID-19 poses a significant risk to public health and the economy in ways that other disasters do not. The pandemic has shuttered businesses and changed the way people interact with one another. This is all done to stop the spread of the virus insofar as is possible. This Guide makes suggestions and recommendations to enable organizations to adhere to public health restrictions while resuming operations.

A Note on Terminology

Re-entry and re-opening will be used throughout this document. They are not synonymous.

- *Re-entry* refers to going back into the facility to set the conditions for staff to return to work and open the doors to clients.
- *Re-opening* refers to doors being opened to the public and the resumption of business operations.

Continual Improvement

This is a “living” document. It must evolve with our collective experience, input from the Emergency Management community, research, and users. Please direct your recommendations to improve this Guide to the [Centre for Applied Disaster and Emergency Management](#) at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology at CADEM@nait.ca.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

People First

The first principle driving this guide is that the occupants of a facility are the priority. People's safety must be the priority that drives all other decision-making. Businesses need healthy employees to get work done, and customers want assurances that they will not get infected or injured when they come to your facility. Any attempts to resume operations without first considering safety violates numerous workplace health and safety statutes and will prove unacceptable in the court of public opinion, thereby negating any benefits to opening a facility early. Do it safely the first time.

Follow Guidance from Public Health and Jurisdictional Authorities

While we are all eager to return to work, it is imperative that we all follow the guidelines and directions from Public Health, government officials, and regulators. Failure to comply may result in fines, penalties, and liability issues or accidental outbreaks of COVID-19.

A Phased and Scaled Approach

Re-entry must adopt a phased and scaled approach as a gradual return serves to keep the risk low and manageable. This guide describes a five-phase approach:

1. **Confirming Safety** - ensuring safety for people within the facility they will occupy;
2. **Restoration of Essential Services** - to enable occupants to return;
3. **Communication** - with internal and external stakeholders;
4. **Reintegration** - physically into the space, and with new policies and procedures; and
5. **Re-Opening for Business** - welcome clients / customers into the space.

Scaling the approach means that not all departments, personnel, and services need to be reactivated at the same time. Deliberate, gradual re-entry can be adjusted to avoid disruption as the pandemic goes through successive "waves" and allows time for personnel to adjust to new conditions, including returning to more restrictive measures without having to vacate the facility multiple times. Organizations must consider what they will do, how quickly, and who will they tell if they need to close back down, or if they are shut down as a result of an outbreak. Identify what functions are essential, start there, and scale up deliberately and methodically.

Re-opening Takes Time

When considering the complexity of re-opening shuttered / evacuated facilities, society tends to expect a speedy re-opening. There is no one-size-fits-all model; therefore, a careful evaluation must be conducted prior to commencing on-site re-entry and re-opening activities. Do not put haste before safety. This will increase risk levels that may result in further delaying your ability to become fully operational.

This is a marathon, not a sprint. We must take our time and be deliberate about how we slowly ramp up. We cannot simply "flip the switch".

Constant, Coordinated Communication

A point to remember throughout: communicate, communicate, communicate. Everything you do and plan to do should be communicated with key stakeholders at every phase of the process. This will save you time, effort, and money in the long run. Do you have an internal group such as an Employee Advisory Panel or a team you could invite to review your communications in advance of sharing with the wider audience?

New Normal for Now

The COVID-19 pandemic will not be over until there is a vaccine and it has been widely distributed with the overwhelming majority of the population immunized. Public Health Orders and restrictions will remain in place for a long time. These restrictions will be lessened over time, with the distinct possibility that they may be reinstated if there is a second wave of COVID-19. The circumstances of re-entry and re-opening planning are the “new normal for now” not the “new normal”; that will come after we eradicate COVID-19.

Additional Guiding Principles

- **Risk-Based Decision-Making** – consider the risks associated with the decisions being made to ensure that things will not get worse because of the actions taken in the plan and to protect the safety of facility occupants.
- **Adaptability** – circumstances are changing quickly and frequently: disease transmission, government directives, changes to the market, etc. Be prepared to adapt your plan based on the changing situation.
- **Engagement** – Engaging stakeholders in a meaningful way is necessary to ensure their buy-in to the re-opening plan, and to determine if people want to come back to work; both keys to a successful re-opening.
- **Collaboration** – Deliberately seek out opportunities to work with other organizations, landlords, insurers, co-tenants, unions, suppliers, etc. to support your re-entry and re-opening plans.

PLANNING YOUR RE-ENTRY AND RE-OPENING

While this process is linear—each phase follows the previous one—there will be overlap in phases. Most importantly, the situation we are in is constantly evolving. At each step along the way, ask yourself “has the situation changed?”. If the answer is “yes”, revisit the Guiding Principles, and, if it is safe to do so, resume your efforts at the appropriate phase.

1. Confirming Safety - ensuring safety for people within the facility they will occupy;
2. Restoration of Essential Services - to enable occupants to return;
3. Communication - with internal and external stakeholders;
4. Reintegration - physically into the space, and with new policies and procedures; and
5. Re-Opening for Business - welcome clients / customers into the space.

Setting Conditions for Success

Deliberate, risk-based decision-making is key to a successful re-entry and re-opening of a facility. Before Phase 1 - Confirming Safety can begin, the following will help determine if re-entry and re-opening are feasible for your facility at this time.

Convene a Re-Entry Planning Team

Planning for re-entry needs to be coordinated across all departments within your organization. The most efficient way to do this is to establish a re-entry planning team that is specifically tasked with coordinating the various internal and external stakeholders, prioritizing and aligning resources, and ensuring that the plan is effectively communicated. This team must be given a clear mandate with the authority to make decisions. Further, it needs to be made of the “right” people, not necessarily the most senior people.

Composition

This team needs to be inclusive. Include leadership, HR, communications, employee representatives, safety leaders, and the departments that are critical to your operations. Employees should be engaged in the process to ensure a successful implementation of the plan. The team should also be no more than 12 members as it will get unwieldy beyond that.

Characteristics of Team Members

The most effective team for this purpose will be composed of people who are:

- Action-oriented
- Collaborative, and team focussed
- Understand the organization across its portfolios/departments
- Are able to move between the 30,000-foot level and the 1-inch level

Note: the people chosen to work in this team should be people who will be noticed to be absent from their full-time position. Re-entry planning must be done right; put your A Team on it.

Can / Should You Re-Enter / Re-Open?

Before proceeding through the considerations outlined below, determining whether to re-open should be based on the regulatory and public health order environment as well as the economic landscape. Some questions to ask are:

- Is the facility permitted to re-open?
- Can you re-open and comply with the public health order—physical distancing, mass gathering restrictions, etc.?
- Are your employees able to come to work—do they have childcare, do they have access to transportation, can they leave loved ones they may be caring for?
- Knowing that there will be additional costs related to cleaning, personal protective equipment, signs, etc., can you financially afford to re-open at this time?
- Do your clients need your services now, in other words, will you be able to generate sustainable revenue once re-opened?
- Is the building owned by your organization or a landlord? Is ownership shared?
- If you own the facility, do tenants need to re-enter and re-open?
- Have you contacted your insurance provider? Is your coverage sufficient under the current conditions?

Insurance

In the current crisis, numerous programs have been put in place by governments at all levels to support organizations with payroll, rent, etc. Not all programs will apply to all organizations, and none will cover the total cost to organizations. This is where insurance may be able to support. As with other disasters, your insurance may not cover these specific circumstances—if you have named perils vs all risk coverage—and it may not cover this specific type of business interruption. You will also want to consider your life, health, disability, Workers Compensation Board, liability, and Directors & Officers insurance policies. Ask your insurance provider the following questions:

- Will your standard business policy cover business interruptions due to COVID-19?
- Do you have business interruption coverage? If so, is it for named perils or “all risk”?
- Can you get compensation for lost sales and loss of business income?
- What are the options when it comes to re-opening? Does the policy cover repairs to equipment / facilities that were closed?
- Does your policy cover emergency and additional expenses such as mitigation, relocating, payroll, etc.?
- Is there coverage for your employees’ personal property?
- Is there coverage for your customers’ property?
- What are you directed to do with damaged inventory?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly for re-opening, ask if you have the coverage you require to ensure your staff, leadership, board, and clients are covered should it be determined they are exposed to COVID-19 at your facility?

- What does the insurer require you to do to avoid liability or to verify that exposure was not caused by your facility or actions?
- What is your deductible for this coverage?

Further details on COVID-19 specific insurance questions can be found through the Insurance Bureau of Canada at <http://www.ibc.ca/on/business/covid-19>.

A Note on Reputation Management

It would be a critical misstep to open a facility before you have everything in place to ensure a successful re-opening. An organizations reputation can be ruined if someone gets sick at your facility, an injury results from early re-opening, or the organization is seen as not being transparent. The risk could potentially be catastrophic, and you may find yourself managing a reputational crisis if you are forced to close due to a violation of regulations, public health orders, or an outbreak at your facility. Reputation management should be considered as part of your risk assessment prior to making the decision to re-enter or re-open. Impacts to reputation should be reconsidered once the plan for re-entry is in place. Risks to reputation should be evaluated at each step along the way to factor in the changing situation.

Remember: *Working from home, whenever possible,
is ALWAYS the best option during a pandemic.*

PHASE 1 – CONFIRMING SAFETY

When considering whether to re-enter, or re-open, your facility the first consideration must be the safety of people within the environment. This means both people—your team, contractors, clients—and your facility itself. From here, determine what are the factors and conditions that keep a facility closed, partially re-opened, or fully re-opened. From there, planning can proceed to execution.

Identify Risks

Occupational Health and Safety Code requires that workplace risks be identified, controlled, and communicated to employees and occupants. For COVID-19, the risks include:

- Transmission through contact with infected persons;
- Transmission through contact with infected surfaces;
- Physical risks associated with the structure, systems, or contents of a facility; and
- Psychological/mental health risks associated with fear, uncertainty, and change.

People

The physical and psychological safety of occupants is critical. Consider the following:

		Yes?	No?
<i>Occupational Health and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to meet all occupational health and safety regulations and guidelines under current conditions? Have any regulatory requirements been extended? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you conducted an updated hazard assessment or safety inspection? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to adhere to the cleaning / disinfection requirements outlined by your jurisdiction? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you able to support the psychological health needs of your employees? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do employees feel safe coming back to work? What is the procedure to address “refusal of unsafe work”? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are pest control measures in place and have all pests been removed from the facility? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any credentials or license requirements been waived, suspended, or otherwise altered? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Occupational Health and Safety</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a surveillance program been established to monitor the status of the disease in the community, and within the workforce? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has a screening program been established to ensure persons who are infected do not enter the premises? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process for removing a customer or member of the public from the premises if they show signs of illness? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process to identify and notify employees and the public that they may have been exposed to an infected person? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process for cleaning/disinfecting/closing an area where a person was infected? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process for sequestering personnel who are critical, so that they do not get exposed to the public or infected persons? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process for identifying and controlling a new outbreak within the workplace? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the process for closing the facility again? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need medical staff to conduct pre-entry health checks? (Questionnaires, temperature checks, etc.) 		
<i>Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are leaders aware of the overall situation and executive's intent? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are leaders able to return safely to set the conditions for re-entry and re-opening? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a plan to address concerns raised by leaders? 		
<i>Staffing for Re-entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there members of your team that perform essential functions for re-opening and, if so, are they available? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If these members have key enabling staff, consider "pairings" of people. 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Staffing for Re-entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been significant staff turnover during the close-down? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have enough staff to re-enter and re-open? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If not, can you hire? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have “vulnerable” employees who may not be able to return? (Immunocompromised, health issues that may not be publicly known, pregnant, elderly, single parents, etc.) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a mechanism for these people to reach HR/leadership to make accommodations for their situation? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What training will be required to get staff ready to re-enter? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there union collective bargaining requirements that need to be addressed? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your facility maintenance staff available? • If not, can you hire? 		
<i>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you considering using volunteers to support your re-entry and/or re-opening? • If so, how are you going to engage with the public to recruit and train volunteers? • Have you consulted with the Workers Compensation Board and your insurer regarding liability issues with volunteers? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you require additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for your team? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you sourced and acquired the PPE you require for the restoration of essential services? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you sourced and acquired the PPE you require for reintegrating your employees? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you sourced and acquired the PPE you require for re-opening to the public? 		

Facilities and Equipment

The structural integrity of all facilities is essential for the safe return of occupants. While in most disasters, it's easy to see damage. During the current pandemic, many facilities have been shuttered and, as such, the scale and scope of damage is not readily apparent. In this phase, consider the following items:

		Yes?	No?
<i>Re-Entry Team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who will do the re-entry inspection? (Safety, Facilities, Maintenance, Building Inspector, Insurance advisor, restoration company, utility crew, security, food service operator, etc.) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do they need to know? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What PPE or specialized equipment do they need to re-enter the facility? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long can they be in the building to do the inspection? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are photos authorized? 		
<i>Physical Structure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the physical structure safe to enter and eventually occupy? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any missing structural items? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the facility require additional cleaning or disinfection? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you conducted a rapid damage assessment to determine the time required for re-entry? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated that timeline with key stakeholders? 		
<i>Utilities & Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your electrical system (high voltage, insulation, power integrity, etc.) functioning as it should be? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your water distribution system functioning as it should be? Has it been flushed to ensure it is potable? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your sewer system functioning as it should be? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the natural gas system functioning as it should be? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your air handling system functioning as it should be? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Utilities & Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need to make any modifications to comply with public health orders or regulations within your jurisdiction? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any hazardous material or waste that must be removed? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have reliable communications systems in place (telecommunications, internet, etc.)? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were any maintenance requirements deferred or not completed which need to be addressed prior to re-entry? 		
<i>Life Safety Systems</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your fire alarms and pull stations functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your fire suppression systems working functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are security systems working as they should be? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are other life-safety systems (emissions detection, CO/CO2 detectors, etc.) working as they should be? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, and AED's serviceable? 		
<i>Security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need (additional) security personnel in place to re-enter? 		
<i>Furniture and Supplies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can furniture be salvaged? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can your supplies be salvaged? Have some expired? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have enough hygiene and sanitation supplies to clean furniture and supplies? 		
<i>Amenities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are elevators and escalators functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are washrooms functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are kitchens and appliances functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are gyms and other health facilities functional? 		

Communication

Early, consistent and transparent communication with employees is deemed the single most important thing to build employee trust which supports compliance. In this phase, focus on communication with stakeholders to inform them of your re-entry plan and its timeline. This will identify any critical gaps or obstacles prior to you being too far down the path and having made financial commitments. You will also want to identify what new temporary signage you will need prior to re-entry and ensure it is available and installed as part of this phase.

PHASE 2 – RESTORATION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES

Once the facility has been determined safe to re-enter, the next phase involves restoring essential elements including your people, facilities, external dependants, and insurance. Determining which sub-elements are “essential” will guide who and what is restored first and to what level prior to re-activating the larger organization / facility.

People

Your people are clearly necessary to operate the physical/technical processes of the facility and to carry out business functions. That said, not everyone falls into the “essential” category.

		Yes?	No?
<i>Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your executive and management team able to return to work? Do they have to be on site? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you Board of Directors / Elected officials able to execute their duties related to re-entry and re-opening? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are all leaders “essential”? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there critical functions of the leadership team that can only be completed by certain levels—spending authorities, contracting authorities, policy approvals, etc.—or can these be delegated? 		
<i>Essential Staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who are the employees that perform an essential function to ensure your facility can re-open? Are these employees available to return? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do your essential staff have to be on site, or can they work remotely? Does a change in working location change their “essential” status? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In what sequence should personnel return? Can some return before others? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will you support essential personnel who cannot return to work due to children who cannot return to school, or caring for an elderly or sick person? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Essential Staff</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should some essential personnel be sequestered from high-traffic areas, customer interactions or public spaces? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you be using volunteers to support re-entry? If so, do you have insurance coverage for volunteers under current conditions? 		
<i>Human Resources Policies & Procedures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have adequate sickness, absenteeism, and special leave policies to support staff through the current pandemic once they have returned? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your health insurance & benefits programs provide coverage in the event of a COVID-19 related absence or illness? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your travel policy adhere to government restrictions? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have HR / training programs in place to support re-integration of your team? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have policies in place to support staff retention during this pandemic and beyond? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you able to implement flexible work arrangements for staff that do not have to be on site? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do personnel who are sent home sick get paid? 		

Facilities

Restoring your facilities, although straightforward, is labour-intensive. Depending on how long you have been away from your facility, there may be additional disruptions that are not related to the COVID-19 pandemic that you may need to address. Now that the facility is deemed “safe”, consider and address the following:

		Yes?	No?
<i>Safety System Inspections</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any expired safety systems inspections may need to be completed prior to re-entry. If local authorities are needed for these, there may be challenges with availability. 		
<i>Repair, Disinfect, or Replace</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC system (motors, duct work, filters, insulation, ammonia systems) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water system (cold and hot water, sewer drainage, steam delivery, chillers, boilers) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steam sources (if piped in from other places e.g., utility companies it may impact equipment) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical system (wiring, lighting, paging and call systems, emergency generators, fire alarms) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic communication systems (telephones, paging and call systems, computers) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gas systems (natural gas, industrial gasses, medical gasses, etc.) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hazardous materials storage and disposal systems 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevators, escalators, and stairwells 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-touch or common surfaces (door handles, handrails, telephones, keyboard/mouse, coffee machine, sink taps, toilets and sinks, vehicles, work tools, point-of-sale terminals, tables, desks, etc.) 		
<i>Utilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your utility providers able to support your facility load? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you restored / reactivated all utilities: 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Utilities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy (electricity and gas) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastewater 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunications • Waste removal (including hazardous materials) 		
<i>Food Services and Appliances</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has stored food (dry and canned goods) been inspected for damage or contamination and discarded if it is unsafe to eat? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have ice-machines and refrigerators been cleaned and sanitized? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has all perishable food been discarded? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have all food-contact surfaces been cleaned and sanitized? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have pest control systems been restored? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has local food service certification been obtained? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ensured shared food (potlucks) is not brought into the facility? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you removed shared dishes and cutlery if a dishwasher is not available? 		
<i>Space Reconfiguration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you adjusted the facility layout—move cubicles and workstations to accommodate physical distancing, designate areas for eating, etc.? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you removed seating capacity in common areas? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you removed cushions and soft/cloth items and coverings? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you installed physical barriers between workstations that are too close? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ensured all exit pathways and doors are clear when changing layouts for physical distancing? 		

		Yes?	No?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you preplaced special signage required for social distancing (markers on the floor separating people by 2 metres at checkouts, one-way hallways, single passengers in elevators)? 		
<i>Space Reconfiguration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all temporary interior divisions meet building and fire codes? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered placing hand sanitation stations at the entrance and exit? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you installed physical barriers between workstations that are too close? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ensured all exit pathways and doors are clear when changing layouts for physical distancing? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you preplaced special signage required for social distancing (markers on the floor separating people by 2 metres at checkouts, one-way hallways, single passengers in elevators)? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all temporary interior divisions meet building and fire codes? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered placing hand sanitation stations at the entrance and exit? 		

Supply and Distribution Chains

		Yes?	No?
<i>Supply Chain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your suppliers operating? • Do they have new processes and procedures that you need to be aware of? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your normal supplies available? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the additional supplies you are going to need (PPE, sanitizer, etc.) available? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you confirmed your suppliers' timelines for delivery of supplies? • Have they changed? • Does that impact your re-entry / re-opening timeline? 		
<i>Distribution Chain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your distributors operating? • Do they have new processes and procedures that you need to be aware of? 		
<i>Distribution Chain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your distributors' timelines for delivering the goods you produce? • Have they changed? • Does that impact your ability to serve your client base? 		

Equipment, Technology, and Work Processes

While most of the equipment will not be new, there are a few key considerations that need to be made here:

		Yes?	No?
<i>Equipment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long does it take for your equipment to be reset and restarted? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your equipment need calibration time? Does it need to be inspected following recalibration? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there new procedures for using equipment to accommodate public health orders? 		
<i>Technology</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are IT and telecommunication systems functional? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can they support on-premise and off-site work arrangements? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have they been maintained, "patched", and backed up? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long will it take to move computer devices and peripherals from employees' homes back to their office location? 		
<i>Work Processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are your Payroll & Pension systems in place and functioning? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are financial systems and financial instruments ready for the return of customers? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What critical business functions must be resumed once the building is reoccupied? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will personnel schedules be reconfigured to minimize contact (staggered start times, shift lengths, etc.)? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can work conditions be modified to reduce contact with the public or customers (no entry into customers' homes, no handling of cash, no long queues, etc.)? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Work Processes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can fire/evacuation/shelter-in-place emergency response plans be modified to reduce contact? (more exits, more/smaller muster points, more shelter locations, longer return time for high-rise buildings) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What processes can be modified to support distancing and density? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide disinfecting supplies to each employee and encourage daily disinfection of personal workspaces, work vehicles, and tools? 		

Update (or Write) Your Business Continuity Plan

The current situation with COVID-19 poses significant risks to any organization. Between the pandemic itself, other hazards such as wildfire, flood, sever weather, etc., and the disruption to the global economy, there is a clearly demonstrated imperative for a Business Continuity Plan. If you have one, you will want to update it. If you do not, put one in place before proceeding to the next phase.

If you need help, the City of Calgary has an excellent guide for writing a Business Continuity Plan for businesses and non-profits, complete with an easy to follow template. It can be found at this link:

<https://www.calgary.ca/CSPS/cema/Pages/Prepare-for-an-emergency/Prepare-your-business.aspx>.

PHASE 3 – COMMUNICATION

Communication is critical to successfully navigate the re-entry process. While this is identified as its own phase, communication is critical in all phases. Communication with employees, contractors, critical service providers, customers, insurers, and your supply chain will have begun as noted in previous phases.

During this phase, you need to begin communicating with external stakeholders, most importantly, your client base.

		Yes?	No?
<i>Internal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has your leadership team (including your Board) been fully briefed on the re-entry and re-opening plan? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your employees (including contractors and volunteers) been briefed on the re-entry and re-opening plan? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you have a plan to address concerns that are raised by employees? 		
<i>Stakeholders</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your needs and plans with your key contractors? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your needs with your key suppliers? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your needs with your key distributors? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your plans with your industry body, partner organizations, mutual aid organizations, chamber of commerce? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your plans with your regulatory body? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated with your landlord/tenants? 		
<i>Public</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you communicated your re-opening plan with your clients? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need / want to make an announcement to the general public regarding your re-opening plan? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Public</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need additional / new marketing materials? Do you need a new marketing strategy? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are you using channels that are relevant to your audience (social media, traditional media, mailers, etc.)? 		

Communicating Safety

An essential element to all communications is outlining what actions were taken to make the facility safe. Outline the mitigation efforts done to prepare for the re-opening as this will directly support peoples' psychological safety. Remember, it is one thing to say that a facility is safe, its entirely another to convince people of that.

Be Audience-Specific

Communications will be different for each audience, so communications products need to address the needs of each audience individually. An employee will need to be told different information than a supplier, for example. Also, protocols to be followed are specific to each audience. So, tools and messages need to be developed and communicated with the appropriate audience in mind. Consider establishing an advisory committee with internal representatives that support each of these key audiences and bring them together to ensure their communications needs are being met.

PHASE 4 – REINTEGRATION

Return too quickly, and you will appear insensitive—or worse, oblivious—to the situation. Return too slowly, and you may lose key members of your team or market share to other organizations. People who have been out of work without a full paycheque will likely want to return to work quickly. Again, understanding that the main objective is to ensure people remain healthy and to avoid creating an outbreak will serve to answer the question about timing.

The other critical point to remember is that this is not an “all-or-nothing” scenario. Reintegrate those essential members of your team first, re-enter only those facilities that are essential to get back up and running, then integrate more employees in a controlled and measured manner. This is where a scaled approach, where you slowly ramp up and assess challenges and successes, before bringing everything back in as quickly as possible.

Change Management

People do not always like to accept change. Changing their behaviours in the workplace will take time and patience. Ensure you have a mechanism in place for your employees, volunteers, clients, and customers to offer feedback and suggestions for improvement to the changes. Review and share comments and feedback to let them know you’re listening. Work with your communications teams to support changes in routines and behaviours with posters, social media campaigns, and other visual materials to support the outcomes and behaviours you wish to change. If people do not follow your new procedures or policies, your company or organization will be at risk of an outbreak.

Policies & Procedures

Where new policies and procedures have been introduced, consider the following: your leadership team will set the tone for all employees, and your employees will set the tone with your clients. Have you set them up for success?

		Yes?	No?
<i>Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who determines when the facility is re-opened? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has your leadership team been trained on the new policies and procedures? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you developed information and training packages for your leadership team to support their teams to understand these new policies and procedures? <i>(Note: the same training can be used for leadership and teams if that fits with your organizational culture)</i> 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the leadership team clearly communicated expectations? 		

		Yes?	No?
<i>Leadership</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is your leadership team setting a supportive and compassionate tone for your employees? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your leadership team have the supports they need—training, HR advisors, playbooks, etc.—to guide the re-opening and “new normal for now” for the organization? Are they prepared to “model the way”? 		
<i>Staff & Contractors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What training will be required to get staff ready to re-open? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have your staff (employees, contractors, and volunteers) been trained on the new policies and procedures? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the staff been able to voice concerns, provide feedback, and engage meaningfully with the leadership team? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does your staff have the supports they need to implement the re-opening plan and effectively serve the client? 		

Facilities

At this point, your facilities have been inspected, disinfected, and repaired as needed. There may have been adjustments to facility layout which will impact how your employees go about their routine. Prepare people for the new layout, in the same way they would after a move or renovation. Take time to orient your teams to any changes to the facility including layout, expectations around using certain areas—such as the lunchroom—and how to help clients navigate these changes. It may be helpful to do shift briefings for the first while to update staff on process and procedures in the facility as things will likely have to be readjusted as we learn about the new layouts.

While seemingly small, any changes will impact how your team interacts with the tools they use to do their job. This could impact productivity, timelines, and morale. Most importantly, it will take time to adjust to the changes.

PHASE 5 – RE-OPENING FOR BUSINESS

If there is one point to keep in the front of mind as you re-open facilities it is this: it is one thing to make your facility as safe as possible, it is entirely another to convince people that it is safe. As we move forward, we can expect that people will be suspicious of every cough or sneeze, and that people will not react in the same way to everyday occurrences that they did prior to the pandemic. Keep this in mind as you re-open.

Communicate!

Communication will likely be at its highest level during your re-opening. This is because all eyes will be on you, your team, your facility. Not only do you have to inform your team, stakeholders, and clients about what is going on, but you will need to be highly aware of reputation management. This may mean that you need to engage employees to be great ambassadors to enable you to stay on top of this critical component.

Your Team

Your team—leaders, employees, contractors, and volunteers—will be keen to resume their duties and return to a semblance of “normal”. That said, this is the time when many of the restrictions that have been in place will appear to be lifted. This will likely cause apprehension and anxiety about potential exposure to infection for some of your team members. Be patient. Support them.

Employees’ Families

Your team has potentially been away from their place of work for weeks, if not longer. Families have adjusted to the “normal for now” and will need to adjust to the “new normal for now”. This will take time, and you will need to be aware that not all members of your employees’ families will be returning to work immediately for numerous different reasons. Consider how you can support your employees, and their families, through this transition to the “new normal for now”.

Suppliers and Distributors

Suppliers and distributors will continue to face challenges until such time as the global economy recovers. Maintaining communication with your key suppliers and distributors will prove invaluable as it will allow you to appropriately manage expectations of your team and your clients.

Clients

As with your team and their families, your clients will likely be reacting to seemingly everyday occurrences in ways they had not before. The adjustment to the “new normal for now” will take time. The tenets of good customer service have perhaps never been more important than they will be when you re-open under COVID-19 conditions. Patience and understanding are the ultimate virtues.

CONCLUSION

To paraphrase Admiral Peter Neffenger, all crises come to an end. The actions we take now will have a profound impact on how we come out of this. As we consider re-entering our facilities with a view to re-opening them to the public, the process outlined above is intended to serve as a guide to help you navigate planning your facility re-entry and re-opening.

The Guiding Principles are truisms no matter what the disaster. They are there to help you focus on what matters before expending any additional time, effort, or capital.

- People First
- Follow Guidance from Public Health and Jurisdictional Authorities
- A Phased and Scaled Approach
- Re-opening Takes Time
- Constant Communication
- New Normal for Now
- Risk-Based Decision-Making
- Adaptability
- Engagement
- Collaboration

These principles are as relevant as ever during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Finally, the phased approach is designed to provide a logical process to follow with a series of prompts to consider as you prepare for the day you re-open your doors.

1. Confirming Safety
2. Restoration of Essential Services
3. Communication
4. Reintegration
5. Re-Opening for Business

This is a marathon, not a sprint. Re-opening will take time and it must be deliberately planned. This guide is designed to set the conditions for a successful re-opening of your facility.

“We have come so far together, and we can stay the course if we lean on each other. With solidarity, generosity and community, we will overcome this together.”

- Dr. Deena Hinshaw (April 24, 2020,

Twitter)

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