

Rethinking Work, Workforce, and Workplace

C H E C K L I S T

Responding to COVID-19 Impacts & the New Normal

Workforce planning is the cornerstone of a viable tourism business. Tourism relies on its people to deliver the *experience*; without them, tourism lacks heart and meaning. COVID-19 has had profound impacts on the workforce. Subsequently, employers need to completely overhaul their human resource practices and policies. Regardless of the size of business, these workforce plans need to factor in the types of new skills and the ever-changing work environments that are being implemented because of COVID-19.

Tourism employers can expect a gradual and slow recovery period. This will impact businesses in ways that are unfamiliar, such as changing business models, adapting or developing new products and services, or learning to work with fewer workers and rely more on technology to augment or enhance the services provided. Perhaps the most profound impact of COVID-19 on tourism businesses has to do with the impact on workers. More than ever, the pandemic underscores the need for a resilient workforce that is quick to adapt. Tourism, after all, is dependent on the human dimension—it's the skilled workforce that delivers on the service promise.

This checklist is intended to help employers rethink, redesign, and optimize their workforce to respond to the future of work.

REFLECT ON THE IMPACTS AND CHANGES TO YOUR WORKFORCE

How many employees, and which ones?

- What will be the composition and size of the workforce you need based on the changes you're planning to make to your business? How many will be full-time, part-time or casual workers?
- Think about your needs in the short term (perhaps 2 - 4 months) and the longer term (such as 5 - 12 months)
- Is there a possibility of maintaining or increasing the number of employees working remotely?
- Will there be layoffs?

What skills are needed?

- Do your employees have the skills that are needed?
- What are the gaps?
- Look for ways to provide employees with varied, adaptive, and flexible roles so they acquire transferable and cross-functional knowledge and skills

Which employees should come back to work and when?

- Which employees are ready to return? Which ones are not?
- Do any of the employees require additional supports or accommodations (e.g., special scheduling requirements because of caregiving requirements, a worker that is part of the high-risk group)

Are new investments needed to enable workers to be productive? For example:

- Reconfiguring the workplace to comply with physical distancing and health and safety measures
- Reskilling or training to prepare workers for new demands, such as cleaning protocols, new or altered tasks, managing staff working remotely, cyber risks, and data protection
- Retooling or enhancing technology platforms or access to collaboration tools (both at home and in the workplace, to enable people to switch easily between the two)
- New technology to augment or enhance employee work



- What are the required changes to HR policies?** For example:
 - Procedures for reporting illness
 - Extended absences (e.g., employees in quarantine or self-isolation, paid time off and leave)
 - Workplace accommodation policies
 - Staff travel guidelines
 - Working remotely
 - Privacy law in the context of pandemics and employee and employer rights

ESSENTIAL THINGS TO THINK ABOUT IN YOUR POST-COVID WORKFORCE PLANNING

- Prioritizing and emphasizing health, safety and employee wellbeing**, for example:
 - Help ensure employees are confident about their own safety
 - Look for ways to help employees address financial concerns or seek financial assistance, where needed
 - Offer support for workers struggling with mental health
- Compliance with new protocols** (e.g., processes to follow when an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and the implications on guests, other staff, and products)
- New/expanded health and safety training**
- Telework/telecommuting practices**
- Guidance for high-risk and essential workers**
- Leveraging government programs**
- Clear policies**, including:
 - How to address absence due to sickness or caring for relatives
 - Protocols for guests
 - Procedures for reporting illness

**Policies will need to factor in special provisions for parents (e.g., to deal with extended school or childcare closures) and for staff that travel and may be forced to stay at a destination longer than expected.*
- Impacts of terminating employees**
- Impacts on insurance policies and premiums and other long-standing arrangements** employers have with their employees.

N O T E S

You may also want to review the following Tourism Recovery checklists:

- Helping Employees Transition Back to Work or to New Job Roles
- Guidance on Terminating Employees

