

Helping Employees Transition Back to Work or to New Job Roles

C H E C K L I S T

Optimizing Skills and Worker Retention

Tourism businesses are expected to reopen gradually, and as they do things will be different. Not all workers will return, and not all at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that businesses will start with a small number of workers, many part-time, until there is sufficient demand for more workers and the businesses are profitable. In many cases, because of changes in the work environment, the nature of the job will be different and there may be a need for re-orientation or new skills training.

Change can be unsettling and cause stress. It is important that tourism operators employ strategies to help employees transition back to work and to new job responsibilities. Ultimately, employers have a need for a more flexible and responsive workforce—one that can respond to evolving workplace and skills demands or severe business disruptions.

This checklist will help employers prepare to welcome employees back to work and for the possibility of reassigning workers to new roles.

WHILE EMPLOYEES ARE AWAY FROM WORK

- Regularly keep in touch with employees** while they are away from work (e.g., temporary layoff, extended leave of absence):
 - Keep them informed on what is happening
 - Answer questions truthfully and respond to possible rumours or misinformation
- Acknowledge difficulties and limitations because of isolation from colleagues and work:**
 - Find out how they are coping and let them know they can reach out for support
 - Promote effective communications—verify they have the right tools, encourage virtual meetings
 - Recognize contributions and successes
- Where changes are expected in the workplace** (e.g., fewer workers to start, different operating hours, new operating procedures or expectations):
 - Be explicit, honest, positive and accessible, describing why the change is happening, what to expect and when the change will take place
 - Explain how the change will be implemented (e.g. vaccination policy, mask policy)
 - Discuss possible challenges and take steps or make resources available to address concerns raised by employees
- Provide fair notice** when employees are expected back to work:
 - Accommodate needs and be flexible on start-up times (e.g., allow time to arrange for childcare or transportation, where needed)
 - Enable employees to continue work at home, where possible
- Address job insecurity**, for example:
 - Explain plan to retain existing employees, with goal to develop broad range of skills to ensure employees have as many opportunities as possible
 - Advise on stages to bring back employees, such as starting with fewer people and more part-time situations



- Where layoffs are expected, give as much advanced notice to affected workers as possible
 - Provide placement counselling/make referrals to local career services; provide information about alternative job opportunities in the community and information on how to obtain economic assistance
- Increase availability of workplace health programs and services**, such as counselling services, information sessions on maintaining healthy lifestyle

MATCHING EMPLOYEES TO THE 'BEST FIT' JOB

- Discuss need to make changes to employee job roles** to reflect new work practices:
- Explain process that will be used (e.g., review skills and interests and match workers to the new skills or roles, with added support and training to help them adjust)
 - Listen carefully to employees' concerns:
 - Provide detailed resources to reassure employees that you've heard their concerns
 - If they express fear of change, offer realistic reassurance that additional skills training and supports are there to help them make the change successfully
 - Reinforce what the employee currently does well and has previously accomplished:
 - Emphasize how these strengths will help them transition to new roles or responsibilities
- Formally or informally assess employees' skills and interests or aspirations**, for example:
- Employee self-assessment
 - Supervisor assessment
 - Discussion on strengths, successes, areas that could be developed
- Discuss possible needs that require accommodations or consideration**, for example:
- Scheduling requests to accommodate childcare schedule or available transportation
 - Employees living with someone from a high-risk group (e.g., over 65, existing health problems)
- Discuss potential new skills, tasks or job role:**
- Be explicit, answer questions
 - Seek agreement on the revised job role and schedule
 - Create job description
- Determine professional development or skills training needs:**
- Focus on the skills gaps between employee competencies, experience, and qualifications and the target job requirements
- Develop individualized development plan (IDP)**, for example:
- Prioritize areas of development
 - Identify and select development strategies (e.g., assignments, training courses, coaching)
 - Identify resources and supports required
 - Set milestones and timelines (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)
- Provide support and guidance:**
- Track progress and results

N O T E S

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

- Guidance on Terminating Employees Checklist

