

Let's start planning for Return to Office (RTO) now!

The curve for the coronavirus is starting to flatten. As such, many of our clients are shifting their focus to bringing employees back to the office. This is also known in the industry as Return to Office (RTO). So, what can we do **now** to plan, so that we are operationally ready when we get the “green light” to come back to work?

We first must make sure that our teams have a safe and healthy workplace to come back to. It's not too early to start planning for the time that quarantines and shelter-in-place orders end. We will have a new distributed workforce ecosystem to get prepared for.

[Gensler](#) and [HOK Architects](#) have provided great tips for planning for Return to Office (RTO):

Tip 1: Enhanced cleaning

Hand sanitizer will still be needed. Desks and doors still must be sanitized regularly, and more rigorous cleaning protocols should be established.

Tip 2: Phased employee returns

Some companies are considering bringing their workforce back in phases. This is to help limit the number of employees in the office at one time. One consideration is offering an option for alternating days where employees work in the office and then work from home.

Tip 3: Social distancing

More than likely the 6-foot social distancing rule will still be in effect until the threat of the virus is gone. For you, this might include marking/taping off area on the floor as reminders to your employees. Lounge chairs should be placed further apart. Conference rooms will be shrunk down to 10 people at a time. There may be limits on the number of people that can enter an elevator at one time.

Tip 4: Moving desks further apart

There may be the need to [redesign the workstation/cubicle layout](#) from its original configuration if the desks are less than 6 feet apart. Consider adding glass partitions to low-walled cubicles to help block the potential transmission of the virus.

Tip 5: Reduce hot-desking/benching

Many bench desks are not six feet wide and would not allow for the current social distancing guidelines. Companies may have to pull desks apart or stagger employees, so they are not facing one another. Hoteling stations or hot desking may be put on pause until the pandemic is over.

Tip 6: Digital Imaging

While some employees will return to the office, others may choose to work from home. The need for digital information is a must when working remotely. Perhaps hiring a [digital imaging provider](#) to digitally scan your most important files (especially for law firms) will allow for ease of access.

Tip 7: Greater Demand

Finally, the pandemic has put some moving companies out of business, so the capacity will not be able to keep up with the demand. Secure your moving resources now, even if your move date is not set in stone.

Given that time is of the essence to set your RTO plan in motion, consider enlisting the support of a [moving and logistics company](#) that know what steps to take. And most of all, stay safe.