



BUILDING YOUR COVID-19 RECOVERY ACTION PLAN: A How-to Guide

Many organizations are looking to HR and Employee Relations to simultaneously help navigate the right now and the next steps as we think about what recovery will look like. ER and HR have been playing a central role in keeping the workforce engaged, productive and resilient during the pandemic, and now, they're being called on to be change agents helping organizations shift to thinking about recovery & reopening, which includes being agile, trusting & united.

Leverage this guide to help lead the conversation and ensure you have the right recovery plan for your organization.



What Does Recovery Mean for Employee Relations and HR?

Resilient leaders must understand the mindset shift from response to recovery. For HR Leaders this means understanding the relevant leave laws and legislation impacting the workplace, the right scenario planning, reimagining the future of work and developing a comprehensive return-to-work plan.

Step 1: Understand the Relevant Leave Legislation Affecting the Workplace

Stay up to date with the current National Labor Relations Act, State and Federal Anti-Retaliation Laws, EEOC, ADA Confidentiality Rule and other laws and regulations impacting the post-pandemic workplace.

Key Things to Consider:

- Employers need to make decisions on who can still work remotely, who is essential to return to work, who will be furloughed and who will be recalled.
- Employers may not base these decisions on protected classifications like age, handicap, gender, or familial status.
- Whether working remotely or at the site, non-exempt employees must be paid for every hour worked including overtime.



- Disciplining, firing or laying off a worker engaged in protected concerted activities is an unfair labor practice that can result in charges being filed with the National Labor Relations Board.
- Remedies for an unfair labor practice include back pay, reinstatement and posting of notices so other employees are aware that an unfair labor practice has been committed.

Step 2: Anticipate Responses & Plan for Hypothetical Scenarios

We are all working without a playbook and there will be issues that arise that we didn't plan for. However, you can reflect on what has worked well, what are some key learnings, plan ahead with hypothetical scenario planning and take a holistic approach to ensuring the well-being of your employees and organization.

Key Scenarios to Consider:

- Employee requests leave because they live with an individual in a vulnerable population
- Employee is incapable of working from home but also unwilling to be physically present at work due to COVID-19 related concerns
- Employee is asked to return to work but prefer to work remotely due to COVID-19 related concerns and able to do their job from home
- Employee prefers to remain on furlough receiving government benefits
- Employee shares rumors or concerns of employees or customers being sick
- Employee requests information about another employee's health condition
- Employee engages in collective or other protected activity to raise concerns about the return to work or workplace



Realign Priorities and Rethink the Needs of the Workforce

The pandemic has already drastically changed the way we work and live. Customer needs, business priorities and employee expectations will continue to shift the way organizations operate and we need to pivot to meet these evolving needs.

Key Things to Consider:

- ❓ What are the skills, roles & people strategy we need after the crisis?
- ❓ What does work/ life balance and flexibility look like post-pandemic?

- ❓ What temporary accommodations need to be made?
- ❓ Are we returning to the way we worked before or adopting new ways of working?
- ❓ Do we have the IT infrastructure and technology we need for remote work long term?

Step 3: Develop a Return to Work Plan & Employee Communication Strategy

Your crisis management team is probably already thinking about what post-pandemic recovery and returning to work will look like. As employee relations and HR leaders, it's critical that you ensure fair treatment, clear employee communication and ultimately, the safety of all employees.

All Return to Work Plans should include:

A strategy for employees being brought back

- ✓ Provide information regarding employees' return date and schedule
- ✓ Ensure neutrality and fairness in selection process

A clear employee communications strategy

- ✓ Draft "Return to Work" Letters
- ✓ Provide information on any changes or updates regarding pay, benefits, PTO, new policies and procedures and at-will employment disclaimer
- ✓ Send "Rehire" letters, wage payment notices and other onboarding paperwork for employees who were previously terminated
- ✓ Set up Employee Training for new safety protocols & train managers on potential COVID-19 related employee issues

Requirements for a safe operation

- ✓ The need for employee testing
 - Who will conduct the testing?
 - How will the tests be tracked?
- ✓ Identification and procurement of supplies required for safe operations
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, gloves etc.
 - Wipes, sanitizers, disinfectants etc
 - Regular workplace cleaning schedules

- ✓ Potential need to change workplaces
- ✓ Determine temporary practices to implement regarding travel restrictions, more aggressive social distancing practices, sanitation, and other efforts to minimize exposure/ spread

Step 4: Plan For Potential Second Wave and Future Crises

A solid crisis management strategy should include reflection and improvement. As we plan for the potential second wave of COVID-19, we need to develop lessons learned from the first shut down and consider the best plan to manage through the potential second wave.

Key Things to Consider:

- Review technology to improve remote work including privacy and security
- Cross-train employees
- Expand, develop and leverage geographically diverse employees, partners and supplies
- Procure appropriate sources of PPE
- Explore additional or different insurance to support business interruption and employee wage protections
- Consider strategies for potential furloughs, closing or reductions in force
- Revisit wellness and health offerings to respond to employee physical, mental and emotional health needs

Is your organization ready for post-COVID-19 recovery and returning to work?

Leverage these tips to help prepare your organization and keep your employees safe. Please reach out to us at Info@hracuity.com or visit hracuity.com/covid19resources. We are happy to provide best practices and strategies we have learned from our community!