

# Eight steps for a safe and healthy workplace

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

by Dr Louise Slaney

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Organisations have continued to operate safely throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with business leaders adapting to protect the health and safety of their employees both on and offshore.

As a return to the workplace becomes the focus, employers are urged to make sure that this is done safely and sustainably.

A recent survey, conducted by International SOS, found that while there is a keen focus on return to work measures, over a fifth (21%) of the respondents still don't have a

workforce resilience. Whatever the environment, whether an office, a lab, factory, workshop or even out on an oil rig, preparation and ongoing actionable insights, drawing from up-to-date information are a must to detect threats, mitigate risks and provide swift treatment as required.

In addition to physical health and wellbeing, employers must also consider the impact on mental health. Home working, isolation and the stress of the unknown are taking their toll on many in the workforce and it is vital bosses address this, extending confidential support to employees.

Organisations that implement and lead with the correct measures will have the greatest chance of survival when they resume "normal" operations. Below are eight steps for WORKSAFE operations.

● **Workspace environment:** Consider screening, zoning, barriers, cleaning protocols, ventilation, access, and the provision of PPE and IT equipment where needed.

● **Operations:** Isolation, essential hygiene, health and medical measures; health questionnaires and providing physical and mental health support.

● **Regulations:** Policies monitored in line with government regulations and ensuring medical needs are fully covered including occupational health and safety and travel.

● **Knowledge:** Understanding of the latest quarantine and transport requirements and medical certificates; ability to do contact tracing and quarantining in a timely manner; privacy considerations are also a must.

● **Social distancing:** Limiting numbers in the workplace, space planning, staggering working hours and days, including A/B team shifts, continued flexible and remote working.



**SAFETY FIRST:** Companies with the right measures in place will fare much better when we reach the new 'normal'

● **Alert:** Set up automated methods to be alerted to emerging threats.

● **Fortify:** Establish partnerships with apolitical infectious disease experts, providing accurate and timely advice.

● **Empowering employees:** Communication and training are key to putting in place new workplace arrangements and policies; engaging employees, clear leadership and role modelling are critical, along with effective complaint practices.

■ For anyone interested in finding out more about International SOS's return to work services please contact Claire Westbrook-Keir, International SOS client relationships director, at [claire.westbrook@internationalsos.com](mailto:claire.westbrook@internationalsos.com)

“Vital precautionary steps will minimise risks and fulfil duty of care responsibilities”

pandemic plan and process in place. Furthermore, around 20% expect mental health issues to pose a major threat in the coming year.

As part of ensuring the sustainability of operations, business leaders must protect the safety and wellbeing of their employees throughout the return to work process. Anything less could result in a backwards step in the successful return to operations and the fight against Covid-19.

While no business can guarantee preventing the spread of infection, vital precautionary steps will minimise risks, fulfil duty of care responsibilities and promote

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