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Tipsheet

Considerations for Returning to the Office

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE CENTER FOR PROTECTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Even the most experienced security and compliance professional could not be fully prepared to anticipate everything needed to return to the office. As we move forward, one thing is certain — the "hot potato" approach of assuming the Security, Legal and Compliance, or Human Resources team is handling an issue is not a strategy to rely on. Having clear guidelines for who is handling different aspects of office safety and security is a step in the right direction.

While this guide is not exhaustive and should be regularly evaluated, here are some important considerations by department:

SECTION 1	*Physical Security Team*

✓	How are you gauging sentiment (and hostility) in response to the return to office guidelines?
✓	Do you have touchless access control systems in the event that employees do not want to touch elevators or door handles?
✓	How often do sanitation protocols occur, and who is responsible for ensuring a regular cleaning cadence?
✓	What is the maximum number of people allowed in the office, and how is this enforced if an area is over limit?
✓	What systems and protocols are in place to ensure who is in the building? In the event of an emergency, e.g., fire, active shooter, how do teams account for those employees that only occasionally come to the office?
✓	If there are masking requirements, who is responsible for enforcing the rules? Are there certain areas, e.g., shared break rooms, that are off limits?
✓	Is there regular training for workplace violence signs and resources available should someone identify behaviors of concern?

💬 **BONUS TIP**

Get ahead of threats by starting to collaborate with Legal, Compliance and Human Resources early on vulnerabilities, threat patterns and anomalies to better identify pre-incident indicators.

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SECTION 2 — *Legal & Compliance Team*

- What are the local and regional health and safety guidelines, e.g., capacity and distancing requirements?

- Are there travel restrictions and policies in place for determining if travel is critical? If so, is there a testing requirement for those who return from more at risk regions?

- Are vendors and partners that visit the office subject to the same safety requirements as internal employees?

- Can the organization require employees to get vaccinated, and if so, prove they've been vaccinated as a prerequisite to come into the workplace?

- Will you require masks in all areas, or areas where distancing is not possible? Are there exceptions for vaccinated people?

SECTION 3 — *Human Resources Team*

- Is there a central place or person responsible for all health and safety related updates? How is leadership setting an example?

- Is there technology available to track employees entering and exiting the building for contact tracing in the event of illness, e.g., visitor management system?

- How is feedback solicited from employees regarding their return to work, e.g., anonymous survey, focus group, etc.?

- What resources does the workplace have to provide support to employees facing adverse circumstances, e.g., emotional / mental health support, emergency financial support, medical support, etc.?

- Is there technology available to allow for collaboration between in-office and remote employees?

- Does the organization have the ability to allow for employee flexibility? Do all employees need to return, or can some elect a hybrid model?

In the end, it's important to remember that people want to work for companies that provide a safe, secure and healthy workplace. Use these considerations as a guide to assess how you are preparing to return to the office, and reach out to the Center for Protective Intelligence for support from our team of corporate security experts.