



Office of the Minister

Republic of Liberia

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

P.O. Box 10-9040
1000 Monrovia 10, Liberia



Guide on Returning to Work amidst COVID-19

As lockdown measures ease and businesses look to reopen, the Ministry of Labor in consultation with the National Tripartite Council has developed the following guidelines to assist employers and workers in safely returning to work in a way that cares for them and safeguards their health and wellbeing amid Coronavirus Disease 2019(COVID-19) pandemic.

This guide is intended to supplement the Ministry of Labor previously developed COVID-19 Preparedness Guide for Workplaces and repeal the April 29, 2020 Amendment to the COVID-19 Preparedness Guide for Workplaces. It also focuses on the need for employers to resume unrestricted staffing, carry out normal trade union activities, conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment, develop cleaning, hand washing, and hygiene procedures, maintain a minimum of three (3) feet social physical distancing where possible and manage transmission risk where people cannot maintain a minimum of three (3) feet apart, identify and isolate sick workers, workplace flexibility, and employees training. This guide is based on the application of the Public Health Laws and Revised COVID-19 Declaration of the National Health Emergency by the Ministry of Health.

Employers should monitor communication coming from the Ministry of Health (MOH), National Public Health Institute (NPHIL) and Ministry of Information, Cultural and Tourism (MICAT) to understand how some sectors of businesses are progressively reopening.

1. Unrestricted Staffing and Trade Union Activities

Effective August 1, 2020, all employers are to work along with workers and/ workers' representatives to resume unrestricted staffing and carry out normal trade union activities while applying a hierarchy of control to workplace safety and health.

2. COVID-19 Risk Assessment

All employers and workers are to jointly carry out a risk assessment at workplaces by assessing all tasks performed or job categories held by workers to determine which tasks or job categories involve occupational exposure. The team should consider among other things, exposures from members of the public (e.g., customers, visitors) with whom workers interact, as well as exposures from close contact with coworkers in the workplace and current outbreak conditions in the country.

3. Develop Cleaning, Hand Washing and Hygiene Procedures

Employers should provide soap, water, and paper towels for workers, customers, and visitors to wash their hands, and encourage frequent and proper (for at least 20 seconds) hand washing. Provide hand sanitizer and encourage workers to use it frequently when they cannot readily wash their hands. Identify high-traffic areas, as well as surfaces or items that are shared or frequently touched, that could become contaminated. Target them for enhanced cleaning and disinfection.

4. Social Physical Distancing

- a. Maintain a minimum of three (3) feet social physical distancing where possible

Employers should post signage to remind workers, customers, and visitors of social physical distancing by using floor tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a minimum of three (3) feet distance. Employers should arrange one-way traffic entry through the workplace if possible and switch to seeing visitors by appointment only if possible.

- b. Where it's not possible for people to maintain a minimum of three (3) feet apart, employers should do everything practical to manage the transmission risk by:
- considering whether an activity needs to continue for the business to operate
 - keeping the activity time involved as short as possible
 - using screens or barriers to separate people from each other
 - using back-to-back or side-to-side working whenever possible
 - staggering arrival and departure times
 - reducing the number of people each person has contact with by using 'fixed teams or partnering'

5. Identify and isolate sick workers

Employers should ask employees to evaluate themselves for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to work and to stay home if they are not well. The temperature of both managers and workers should be taken before commencing work. There should be an established protocol for managing people who become ill in the workplace, including details about how and where a sick person will be isolated (in the event they are unable to leave immediately) while awaiting transportation from the workplace to their home or a health care facility, and cleaning and disinfecting spaces the ill person has occupied to prevent exposure to other workers, customers, or visitors. Employers may need to collaborate with health officials to facilitate contact tracing and notification related to COVID-19 cases or possible exposures.

6. Return to work after illness or exposure

Employers are to ensure workers follow the Ministry of Health protocol for discontinuing self-isolation and returning to work after illness, or discontinuing self-quarantine and monitoring after exposure, as appropriate for the workplace.

7. Workplace Flexibility

Employers should maintain flexibility by evaluating existing policies and if needed, consider new ones that facilitate personal leaves and other options that help minimize workers' exposure risks.

8. Employees Training

Employers are to train workers on how to put on, use, and take off PPE; how to clean, maintain, store, and dispose of PPE; and what the limitations of the PPE are.

For more information always check the Occupational Health and Safety section of the Division of Labor Standards, Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Health website; Labor Inspectors will be requested to ensure workplaces are in full compliance.

Signed on this 1st Day of August 2020


Moses Y. Kollie

MINISTER

Ministry of Labor, R.L