



# Ready, Set, Reopen!

Best practice resource for **Professional Offices**

Reopening requires planning to not only survive but thrive. For local offices, we've distilled the key steps for a safe reopening. Here are three steps to take:

- 01 Put safety first**
- 02 Ready your employees**
- 03 Adapt your services**

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# 01. Put Safety First

Professional offices must create a safe working environment that gives employees confidence to return to work, and clients confidence to visit. Properly disinfecting your entire business and designing client-facing areas that work is critical. Here's what we suggest you do:



## Pre-clean. Plus establish your ongoing cleaning plan

- Review [OSHA](#) and [CDC](#) guidelines for **detailed guidance** and disinfecting how-to's.
- **Order cleaning supplies and [EPA-approved](#) disinfectants** and maintain at least a 30-day inventory.
- **Thoroughly clean and disinfect** your business *before* you reopen.
- Check your **HVAC, fire, and life safety systems** to make sure they are working properly.
- Create an **ongoing cleaning schedule for all areas** (e.g. hourly, daily, or weekly). If you have a cleaning vendor, work with them to confirm your cleaning schedule
- **Identify and clean high-touch surfaces** such as countertops, door handles, elevators, common dining areas, and outdoor break areas.
- **Add hand sanitizer stations**, preferably touchless, at entrances/exits/common areas/waiting areas.
- Follow **OSHA/HIOSH guidelines** for proper labeling, use and storage of chemicals.
- Have an enhanced cleaning plan ready should a **positive COVID-19 case** be reported.



## Create appropriate PPE & physical distancing rules

- Require employees and clients to **wear a mask** before entering.
- **Require employees to wear appropriate PPE** like face masks.
- **Post signage** to communicate key distancing rules and reminders in areas where employees may gather like reception areas, elevators, lunch rooms, copy rooms, restrooms, and conference rooms..
- Designate **one location for any deliveries**, require all vendors to wear face masks, disinfect all items, and only allow vendors to enter when escorted by an employee.



## Determine handling of shared materials & limit access to common areas

- **Determine standards** for using shared areas.
- Consider **removing self-serve items in break rooms** e.g. shared condiments, bulk snacks
- Consider **low-touch or no-touch options** e.g. switches, doors, drawers, faucets, soap dispensers
- **Limit sharing equipment**, like office supplies or desks.
- If sharing items is necessary, **post clear directions** about how to clean shared-use equipment.



## Reorganize your floor plan and traffic flow

- **Reconfigure seating**, to ensure 6 feet between desks. Reconfigure seating areas and **add floor markers** in lobbies, waiting areas, or elevators to help with distancing.
- **Designate specific entrances and exits** to control traffic and reduce contact.
- **Install safeguards** to prevent transmission of airborne particles that may carry the virus e.g. sneeze guards at reception desks or get creative with economical barriers like clear, thick plastic.
- **Establish paths** (e.g. one-way, clockwise) to minimize proximity for clients and employees.



## Limit the number of people in a closed space

- **Reduce business occupancy** based on county and state capacity rules. Establish an occupancy monitoring protocol to maintain appropriate capacity.
- **Adapt breakrooms/waiting areas** for social distancing and **stagger breaks to prevent crowding**.

## 02. Ready your employees

The return to work will introduce new norms and uncertainties for your team. Keeping the communication lines open is crucial to ensuring a smooth reopening. Take care of your employees and they'll take care of your clients and each other.

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### Energize and build trust with your people



- Reconnect employees to your **culture and brand values**.
- **Address employee concerns** with compassion and confidence.
- **Confirm schedules, salaries, benefits and HR policies** and highlight/explain changes.
- **Proactively seek feedback** from employees and include them to brainstorm solutions.
- **Revisit HR and safety policies**, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, such as temporary workers, people with disabilities, single parents or those who lack adequate health benefits.
- Find creative ways to **support employee well-being** during this crisis.

### Clearly communicate and train staff on your “new normal”



- Communicate **clearly, early, often, and with compassion**.
- **Find alternatives to in-person meetings**, like communication boards, text or video.
- Make it clear that **employees should not come to work if they have symptoms** or are ill.
- Before work, require employees to **self-evaluate their health**. Require daily sign-ins to certify that they are healthy to work and post a notice at your entrance to remind employees. Consider temperature checks if practical.
- Remind employees of **hygiene basics** like frequently washing their hands properly.
- **Review expectations** for routine cleaning and sanitizing of high-touch areas.
- Create easy ways for employees to **maintain social distancing**. Point out easy markers like six 1-foot tiles on the floor or place plants 6 feet apart as a visual reminder for employees.
- Clearly communicate **expectations for mask/PPE use/disposal** and **consequences** for not abiding. Discuss **who/how to handle clients** who don't want to wear masks or abide by the social distancing guidelines while in your establishment.
- Educate employees on your plan for handling **suspected/confirmed cases** of Covid-19 and what steps they should take if they experience symptoms or feel sick.

### Prepare & post signage!



- Post a notice on **entrances** that no one with Covid-19 symptoms are permitted to enter.
- **Use floor markings** and **physical items** to direct traffic in all areas, including waiting, seating, and restroom areas.
- **At reception areas**, post signs to remind people to disinfect hands and practice good hygiene.
- **In break rooms**, post signs reminding staff to maintain safety and social distancing guidelines.
- **In restrooms and kitchen**, post signs reminding staff to wash hands properly and often.

## 03. Adapt Your Services

Whether your business is brand new or generations old, reopening in the “new normal” presents an opportunity to rethink how you operate. Here are some things to solve for as you adjust your business priorities and strategy for reopening.

### Reimagine new products & services

- Focus on **top sellers** and highlight your **highest margin** goods. Know what will sell **immediately**. And know what will sell **consistently** over 2+ months
- Consider introducing **special products or services** e.g. printers can focus on safety signage, furniture/space experts can consult on floor plans for reopening
- If applicable, create **packaged bundles**, offer products/services to be delivered in the future for an immediate infusion of cash.
- Capitalize on **seasonal opportunities** e.g. Father’s Day specials, Fourth of July bundles.
- Turn distancing rules and regulations into creative **brand moments and opportunities** e.g. branded hand sanitizers, fun floor signs.

### Meet your clients where they are

- **Reach out and talk to loyal clients** to understand what is important to them.
- **Focus on benefits**, not just discounts.
- **Re-engage all existing clients** across all channels, especially email and social media.
- **Spread the word**, ask loyal clients to increase awareness for your offerings among friends & family.
- Ease clients back into purchasing by offering **consultations, delivery, and special hours**.
- Consider offering **special hours** or meetings by appointment for high-risk individuals.
- Get creative with **offering sizes** to meet various needs e.g. offer volume pricing or repackaging for single-use
- Identify **partnerships or collaborators** to extend your reach to new clients through cross-promotion. For example, work with neighboring businesses to jointly attract traffic to all your businesses together.

### Leverage technology when possible

- **Keep building and investing in your online channels** to complement your brick-and-mortar.
- Share brand values, products or create “social experiences” on **social media**.
- If applicable, explore selling on **Instagram** e.g. market your products and allow online orders.
- Sign up for an **app** to help with showcasing your products, location info, ordering and delivery options
- Minimize the use of paper and **migrate to digital** e.g. digital receipts, online inventory
- **Allow remote work** when possible and **use alternative forms of communication** like video or text to minimize in-person training and meetings.

### A Note from ProService Hawaii:

The workplace has changed, it will not be business as usual. Our “new normal” will look very different from what we’ve known it to be. Recovery will require new business models and revenue streams, new staff relations, new relationships with our business partners, suppliers, landlords and clients. It will take a long time to arrive at our “new normal.” Anticipating and preparing for this new business environment will take innovation, patience, and a whole lot of grit. **You’ve got this.**

# Sources:

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- [Businesses and Workplace Guidance](#), Center for Disease Control
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#), Center for Disease Control
- [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#), Environmental Protection Agency
- [Employer's Guide to Coronavirus](#), ProService Hawaii