

small business **re-entry** planning
- beyond quarantine

navigating COVID-19

Dated: May 6, 2020
Bulletin 3



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what's new?

Here we are, beginning to look at the other end of this pandemic and turning our attention and thoughts towards 'Re-Entry into our NEXT NORMAL.' As with much of this life changing event, we anticipate this next phase with a tremendous amount of uncertainty as we face a blank canvas on how to contemplate integration back into a slowly opening economy and business realm.

This COVID-19 Bulletin 3 is aimed at providing some thoughtful consideration for you to start your planning of re-opening, adjusting, and asking yourself those questions about next steps.

This bulletin is slightly different from previous ones as there are merely 'suggestions' of how to proceed. At present, we do not have Federal or Provincially provided programs or policies to help guide us with planning for this Re-entry phase. As you continue to read, you will find out how businesses are taking the helm on charting this new path.



My hope is that this Bulletin provides you with some of the necessary information to plan for the return of your staff and a prepared work environment to keep them safe.

- Christine Isnor



artful re-entry – what can we anticipate?

Let's be clear; businesses are charting the path to navigating the pandemic, including determining the effective roadmap for the next phase of loosening the quarantine restrictions.

The fancy term for this is Stakeholder Capitalism. Businesses, not government agencies, continue to lead some of the significant innovations throughout the COVID-19 crisis, such as distilleries producing hand sanitizer, flag companies producing masks, and clothing companies producing PPE.

Some provinces and the US continue to debate the prospects of a staged reopening, and thus the path forward is still uncertain.

Each guide of those provinces currently introducing their phased opening can be found here.

Nova Scotia continues to report new cases, and unfortunately more deaths, and as such, a minor loosening of some park and fishing restrictions remain the only change in our current Health Protection Act Order.

New Brunswick has penned a comprehensive 4 Phased approach to opening, with Appendix A as a checklist for businesses to open safely.

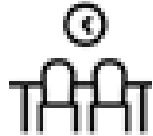
The transition back to our new normal is likely to be slow, uneven, and cautious as we navigate employees' continued fears, government and public health restrictions, school and child-care closures, and -- most of all -- the prospects of a second, and possibly even more deadly, wave of COVID-19. This essentially means that while we begin to open our doors, there are most likely lasting changes to 'how' we do so safely.

Next, you will find some areas to consider for critical planning as you prepare to open your doors.

Preparing to re-open and plan for our next normal way of doing business requires planning, consideration, and thought -- much like a decision tree approach.

Here are some important questions to consider to develop a safe and comprehensive opening plan:

next normal safety measures & protocols for consideration



Work Space Questions:

- Do I have access to a supply chain to order the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – will I have enough masks, sanitizers, and other equipment for my staff?
- Do I have a plan for sanitation/hygiene protocols?
- Do I need to configure workspaces to ensure staff are the appropriate distance apart?
- Do I have methods to provide appropriate hygiene for staff and clients?
- How do I schedule people coming to the office so too many people don't show up on a given shift?
- How do I make sure meetings and work protocols keep people apart? Do I limit the number of people in conference rooms?
- How do I schedule bathroom breaks and meals so people don't get too close?
- And do I need to redesign office space, add partitions, or rearrange desks and locations to move people apart?

more questions...

Work Force Questions:



- Who can continue to work from home, who will need to return to the workplace?
- Will I need to phase back my workforce?
- Who will be the first phase?
- Has there been critical responsibilities that have emerged from COVID I need to continue to maintain? (i.e. Someone to monitor/manage workplace hygiene).
- If a worker feels hesitant to return, what do I do? Can I force them to come back to work?
- When and if a worker gets sick, how do you isolate them and avoid stigma going forward?
- How do I manage a person who needs and wants to return to work, but doesn't have childcare options?
- How do I address staff concerns about other staff behaviors?

Work Process Questions:



- How do I move staff safely around the office? Lunch breaks, coming and going on breaks?
- What do I need to change for office meetings?
- Communal office spaces like boardrooms, lunch rooms, and open working areas, how do I manage those?
- How does COVID-19 change some of my HR policies and programs such as:
 - vacation usage
 - time and attendance
 - health and safety
 - Sick Days and COVID-19 testing
 - Remote or flex work arrangements
 - Performance Management
 - Bonus/Commission Structures

So, that's a lot of questions. There is a tremendous amount to think about and perhaps, you already have. But keep in mind, this is yet another new phase of what is already an uncharted journey and we will get through this and come out stronger on the other side.

some critical pieces to help with this re-entry:

1. **Don't feel you need to figure this out by yourself.** Use the links provided to help inform the steps that are critical for your business and team. And please reach out to me for discussion. I am here to help. christine@ingagehr.ca. I want to see you and your team navigate this well, for your mutual benefit.

2. **Be transparent with your employees.** If there is one KEY thing we've learned through this crisis, it's authenticity that is making all the difference with building TRUST with your team. Talk with them, not AT them about the plan and gain their support and help. Chances are, they are ready to come back to work and want to do so confidently.

3. **Ask their opinion.** Who's closer to your clients or operations than your staff? Get their input on how to integrate; they may have some innovative solutions you didn't think of that would work well.

4. **Take the time to plan ahead.** Be thoughtful about what you need as a business to support your clients. If you need to integrate slowly in order to be successful, take the time. It is better to move slow and intentional with a high level of confidence and safety than rush into re-opening and adopting a 'figure it out later' approach; let's keep you, your staff, and your customers safe.



the human impact

It's fair to say that we're now entering the irritable phase of this grand psychological experiment. Our emotions have been through the wringer over the past 8 weeks and we've now arrived at 'numb'. I cannot impress enough how critical it is to maintain self-care at this point in our journey. A colleague today mused that she was first approaching this at a sprint pace to quickly discover she was actually in an ultra-marathon. Sustaining a level mental fitness is difficult with all the pressures, worries, stressors, and horrible news being hurled at us. Mental Health as we all realize is critical for clear, focused, and effective decision making.

It's fair to say that some employees who return to work are going to be frightened and nervous. It's called "Fear of Return." It is a real emotion as we've all been taught to 'fear going out' for the past few months. Some companies are making "come to work" optional, and are working especially hard to add safety procedures that build on the employees trust that was developed over the last few months.

While you may be able to 'mandate' your employee back to work, it does not benefit them or you. Talk to them and understand their concerns and address them with the steps you've taken to create a safe workplace.

This week is Mental Health Week. There are wonderful resources, toolkits, and information links to use and share with your team and family. Do not underestimate the need for personal connection and contact. The positive impact a simple call, zoom, text, or note can make with your team is invaluable. Seriously, make sure they're okay on a personal, human level. This includes staff you've had to lay off. Knowing you're still thinking about them and checking in brings with it, enormous benefits of kindness, trust, and loyalty.

We've all been through a tremendous amount of stress, strain, isolation, and sadness. Be kind to yourself and others.

On that note. I am here to help in whatever way I can. Please reach out for a chat, pro bono.

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useful re-entry reads and resources

[Federal Site for Updates of Recent Announcements](#)

[COVID19 Canadian Tracker](#)

[NS Provincial Site](#)

[NS Education](#)

[NB Provincial Site](#)

[NB Education](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[Centre for Disease Control](#)

[World-O-Meter](#)

[CFIB \(Canadian Foundation of Independent Businesses\)](#)

[CBC](#)

[Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety](#)

[Lear Playbook](#) – they have tremendous resources available to create and generosity to share.

[Danone](#) – Thankfully, they kept making yogurt through the pandemic.