# Questions to consider before re-opening your association’s office:

## Developed by members of ASAE’s Executive Management Section Council

As several state governors are currently allowing -- or planning to allow -- for the reopening of businesses, you are probably concerned about the health of your employees, members, and the potential liability of opening your association’s office. This document outlines several questions you should consider as you think about reopening your association’s offices. It is by no means comprehensive and is the result of a council conversation.

This document is merely a list of questions to consider as you think about reopening your association’s offices. Please consult your legal counsel before making any decisions.

This is a living document. Please share additional questions you may have with [Ben Martin, CAE, Executive Director of The Review Society](mailto:bkmcae@gmail.com), curator of this resource.

1. Some of my staff are insisting that remote work has proven effective. There are plenty of virtual associations and companies out there, they argue. How does a CEO address their point of view?
2. Is COVID-19 just the nudge we needed to convert our staff to a completely remote workforce?
3. We still have X years on our lease. If we decide to permanently transition to remote work, how do we renegotiate our organization’s lease?
4. We own our building. If we decide to permanently transition to remote work, what are the considerations for selling or leasing our building in the current environment?
5. What about commuting? Even with improved cleaning, some authorities are recommending that workers limit their use of mass transit when possible, and be aware that surfaces can spread infection. Businesses could continue to encourage telework or employ staggered arrival and departure times. What about weekend work, if preferred?
6. Consider offices, cubicles, and even more open office layouts. How do we reduce density in work areas, meetings, and kitchens? How do you create and sustain physical distancing?
7. How do we handle sanitizing shared office equipment like phones, copiers, and postage machines?
8. How about lunch breaks? Some authorities have recommended that employees bring food from home or having prepackaged lunches delivered. Other experts have recommended against allowing employees to run to the corner store and bring lunch back. Should you develop a policy about going out to lunch?
9. What is the cleaning protocol? Some authorities have recommended giving employees disinfecting wipes to clean their keyboards, phones, desks, etc. What will your policy be?
10. Should employers require the use of masks in the office?
11. Is there any concern in disinfecting mail or other deliveries?
12. Should employers urge that employees take their temperature before leaving for the office?
13. Should employers encourage or mandate COVID19 testing for employees on a routine basis? Speak with an attorney to mitigate your risk.
14. What temporary adjustments should be made to sick leave for employees?
15. What about parents with children at home because there is no school or daycare?
16. What do we do if an employee is a Conscientious Objector and just doesn't feel comfortable coming to the office?
17. As an employer, am I allowed to say "no" to someone who wants to work remotely, and who has children at home… but yes to the childless person who can work all day without distractions?
18. Will performance appraisal processes need to be updated?
19. When do we re-open? Now? May 15? June 10? To what extent do we follow the guidance of state and local officials? Speak with your attorney to reduce your risk.
20. Many states are coming into the height of allergy season. Could allergy symptoms be misconstrued as COVID19 infection, and how does an employer deal with those concerns?
21. What do you do if you share office space or building floors with other tenants?
22. Can you create flexible policies that give staff a choice on when to return to the office?
23. How do we ensure the availability of supplies to sanitize the office and PPE for employees? What about things like soap or toilet paper that are in high demand?
24. How do we plan for contractors who may not agree to service re-opened workplaces?
25. What is the protocol if an employer learns that a staff member is infected? For the infected person? For other employees?
26. Should we create different teams that have staggered work hours to alleviate office congestion?
27. As contact tracing becomes more common, what is our legal liability if it is found that our employees led to the spread of the virus, or deaths of other employees, or their family members?
28. How will you balance security and safety (e.g. propping open access-controlled doors within a suite reduces touching surfaces but degrades security)?
29. What about the wisdom/legality of using thermal cameras to take temperatures of arriving staff? Where will that be staged? If it's inside, the person may have already infected people. Outside might be embarrassing or too cold/hot/rainy, etc.
30. If you have staff parking that doesn't accommodate everybody, maybe alternating days for staff to come into the office will free up parking spots and not make some staff rely on mass transit?
31. Do you have a plan to communicate your reopening? Have you considered gathering staff input before issuing such a communication, to get their participation and buy-in?
32. Have you considered employing full time janitorial staff to perform constant cleaning?
33. Is your Employee Assistance Program sufficient to address COVID19 related issues?
34. Ordering of Supplies Prior to Opening: How long will it take to get supplies?
35. What is the protocol of having your doors open and vendors/suppliers/members walking in? What is the signage?
36. What if an employee discloses that a family member/close friend is diagnosed: as an employer, do you then advise a 14-day work from home scenario? What can you ask as an employer to make an educated decision or give advice?
37. How do you handle an employee who is a caregiver or has a family member who is immunocompromised?
38. What is your approach to addressing the emotional health of your employees, given the emotional distress problem that is facing many employees due to COVID19?
39. We had staff concerned about another staff's hygiene and was uncomfortable being in the office with that person. We ultimately had the option to work from home during that time so it was suggested to both to do so. Also, things like an allergy cough or sneeze can be misconstrued as a sign of infection. How do you deal with that?

Government guidance:

* [OSHA guidelines for CV19](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/)
* [CDC guidelines for business response](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

Resource articles:

* American Industrial Hygiene Association [guidelines for offices](https://aiha-assets.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/AIHA/resources/Guidance-Documents/Reopening-Guidance-for-General-Office-Settings_GuidanceDocument.pdf).
* <https://www.wsj.com/articles/going-back-to-work-tips-on-what-your-boss-canand-cantmake-you-do-11587682455?mod=e2li>
* <https://www.dropbox.com/s/10q7lf53n6wn8q7/Safe%20Work%20Playbook.pdf?dl=0>
* <https://www.asaecenter.org/resources/roundup/issue-roundup-coronavirus#/Resources>
* [www.backtoworktoolkit.com](http://www.backtoworktoolkit.com)
* [Managing COVID19 Anxiety](https://adaa.org/finding-help/coronavirus-anxiety-helpful-resources)

Webinars:

* [Bellevue (Washington) Chamber of Commerce](https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/vcB4db2vqTs3GtHH5gSDAqJ-W9W9Lf-s1CcWqaEExB29AXYGMFbyZLFHZOpX6CAZERXXHeFAfnPlX1Y_?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=badWArQtTKOKvwWU80GQTg.1588030334771.14e690a0459ec81c86cf2ce6ee3f474b&_x_zm_rhtaid=997)