



Steps to Build Employee Confidence For a Safer Return to Work

August 4, 2021

Employee vaccination, infection prevention and control and other public health measures

Employers can help build employee confidence for a safe return to work. Employees may feel hesitant, anxious or fearful of returning to work premises, even if they are fully vaccinated. Be flexible, empathic and open to questions to increase employee confidence in returning to the workplace.

Continue to follow public health measures even after vaccination. Vaccination can prevent severe illness from COVID-19. However, people can still spread the virus to others. Refer to the [guidance for employers, businesses and workplaces](#) for more information on infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures to help keep your workplace safe.

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1. Encourage & Support Employee Vaccination

Lead by example and get vaccinated. Share your vaccination experience or why you got vaccinated. Make access to vaccination as easy as possible for employees. Host a vaccination clinic in the workplace and/or create a workplace vaccination policy to encourage vaccine uptake. Having a high vaccination rate will protect employee health, reduce absenteeism, support business re-opening, and promote employee confidence for a safer return to work.

2. Update Workplace Health and Safety Policies

Inform staff and customers about the measures in place to keep everyone safe. Include a section on how to support high risk employees and/or customers who are over 70 years old; pregnant and/or people with health conditions, when possible.

3. Support Employee Mental Health

A safe return to work for employees includes supporting mental health in the workplace. Providing opportunities for employees to openly discuss their concerns about returning to in-person work will help to develop a culture of support. COVID-19 has made life more challenging for all of us. Encourage employees to access support by calling 2-1-1 or visiting the [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources page](#) for a diverse list of services. Also refer to the [Tip Sheet for Managing Stress and Anxiety](#).



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4. Maintain Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) Measures

Continue to follow [public health measures](#) even after vaccination:

- Limit the number of employees on the premises at any one time to allow for physical distancing. Consider flexible work hours, telework or video conferencing for meetings.
- Screen everyone for COVID-19 daily, even if they are fully vaccinated.
- Separate work areas two metres apart. Create one direction walkways, when possible.
- Post signs or barriers to remind staff to maintain physical distance.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often.
- Maintain ventilation systems, or open windows & doors to increase air circulation.
- Identify types of personal protective equipment (PPE) required in your workplace.
- Ensure that employees have PPE that fit them correctly and that they are cleaned or replaced as needed.

5. Daily Screening & Contact Tracing

- Continue with [daily health screening](#) of staff and customers before entry, even after vaccination.
- If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19, they should stay home, self-isolate and get tested, even if they are vaccinated.
- Establish a process for employees to get tested if they have symptoms. This may include referring them to an [assessment centre](#).
- Keep a daily sign-in sheet of employees, vendors and customers for contact tracing.

6. Support Employees to Self-Isolate, if needed

If an employee is exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19, they may not need to self-isolate if they are fully vaccinated, do not have symptoms, and do not have a weak immune system. Fully vaccinated means waiting at least 14 days after receiving 2-doses of COVID-19 vaccine. See link on [Have COVID-19 or been exposed](#).

Under the amended *Employment Standards Act*, employers are required to provide employees up to three days of paid leave, at their regular wage, up to \$200 per day, for reasons related to COVID-19. Call [1-888-999-2248](tel:1-888-999-2248) on how to apply for reimbursement of employee paid leave.

For more information visit toronto.ca/COVID19 or call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600.