



Your Complete Guide to
**Navigating Vaccines and a Safe
Return to the Workplace**

Whitepaper



The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by storm. No one had a pamphlet on navigating a pandemic, so the whole world was trying to figure it out day by day. Over the past year, the COVID-19 situation has taken a toll on companies, local businesses, families, and the global economy.

With restrictions finally lifted and vaccines on the market, it's time to develop your business strategy to integrate into the new normal. Here's your complete guide to managing vaccinations and navigating a safe return to the workplace.

Prioritizing your Employees

The outbreak of Covid-19 resulted in a spike in anxiety in everyone, especially employers and employees. It caused fears about job safety, health concerns, and changes in people's responsibilities. The majority of the world's workforce adopted remote work, and as people have finally begun to adjust, it's time to integrate back.

The pandemic has undeniably affected people both physically and mentally. With that said, it is now more important than ever to prioritize your employees' needs and take all the needed precautions to ensure a smooth and safe transition that suits your business and your workforce.

The pandemic is still ongoing, and whether you're deciding to make a full return to the office or just a partial one, it is your responsibility to protect your employees and maintain their health and safety.



Give your Employees Choices

As the number of cases in the pandemic is dropping, you're probably planning to have your employees return to the office. But don't forget to keep your employees safety in mind.

Developing a strategy to keep them safe as they transition back is essential, but you must also be open to listening to their concerns. While some employees struggled with remote work, others thrived and may not be ready to return to the workplace.

While social distancing rules are in place, only a staggered return of employees is allowed. Many businesses have decided to permanently adopt flexible scheduled and remote work to better accommodate employees' needs by giving them options. Masks and social distancing can feel burdensome in the workplace and may keep them from performing at their best. Offering **Workplace Flexibility** can help make this transition smoother and less overwhelming.

Workplace Flexibility includes:

1. Creating smaller workgroups so that people only come into the office for specific meetings or projects.
2. Employees can work from home or come into the workplace a fixed number of days per week.
3. Allowing employees to book meeting rooms or office time based on their own needs.

1 Mandating Vaccinations

The most recommended way to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is for most people to get vaccinated. No business or employer wants to be the source of an outbreak, but can you mandate your employees to get vaccinated?

Depending on the country/city you are in, labor laws and guidelines may require employees to get vaccinated.

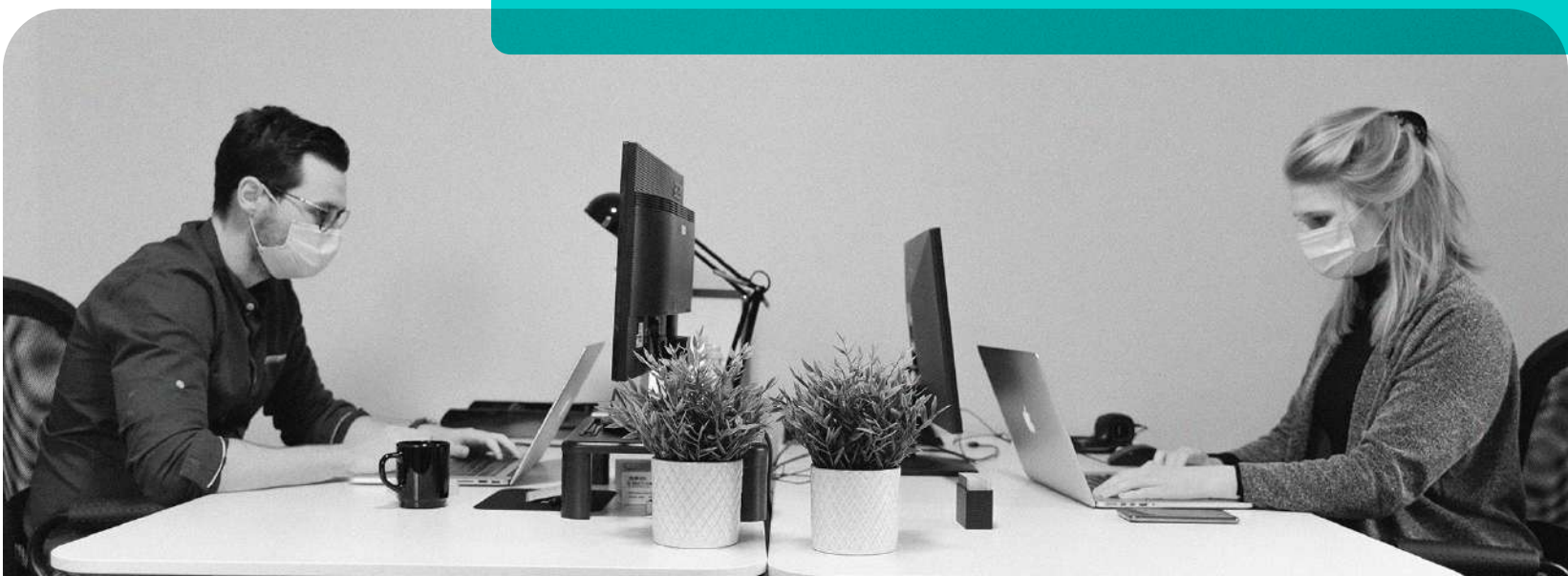
Labor laws that don't allow mandated vaccination do, however, allow other required COVID-19 precautions and protocols.

Mask Mandate: Requiring individuals to wear face masks to protect unvaccinated or at-risk workers in the workplace. Mask rules may differ from vaccinated to unvaccinated individuals.

Mandated PCR Test: An employer can require employees who are not vaccinated to take regular COVID-19 tests to ensure they are not carrying the virus and putting others at risk.

Most people will welcome the opportunity to be vaccinated against COVID-19, but there will most likely be a minority who may not be eligible, reluctant, or refuse to get the vaccine. These people may include:

- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
- Individuals with severe allergies.
- Individuals with religious/personal beliefs.
- Individuals with underlying medical issues.



Encouraging employees to get vaccinated is the best way to provide safe and healthy work conditions - There are various ways to communicate that to your employees.

- Run an awareness campaign to help present a persuasive case for vaccination.
- Connect or recommend reliable centers for your staff to receive the vaccine.
- Offer incentives to employees that get vaccinated.
- Counteract misinformation by consistently offering factual data.

2 Implementing Health and Safety Policies

Returning to the office is a massive step forward towards economic recovery and returning to your business as usual. Companies and organizations must carefully plan out a set of measures for the office before bringing in their employees.

Depending on the labor laws of your country, you may or may not be able to bring your employees into the workplace at once at full capacity. As the pandemic is still ongoing, it is necessary to prioritize your employees' health and overall well-being.

Though health and safety mandates/ rules differ from country to country, every business should apply new policies and protocols.

Things to consider including:

Equipment to be Provided

- Masks, face visors, and disposable gloves to be distributed to all employees.
- Hand sanitizer stations.
- Temperature checks at the entrance.
- Touchless attendance machines such as ZenHR's Geolocation attendance and time tracking feature.

Social Distancing in Common Spaces

- Empty spaces between desks and working areas.
- Plexiglass walls or other barriers between desks/ working areas.
- Closing onsite cafeterias and other shared spaces.
- Elevator occupancy policies.
- Directional floor markings.
- Adopt online communications even for those in the office.



Schedules and Restrictions

- Rotating employees/ work shifts to lower occupancy at the workplace.
- Regulating the number of visitors and customers at a time.
- A strict policy for employees who are sick or have symptoms.

Cleaning Procedures

- Regular cleaning and sanitization of the workplace.
- Clean desk/ working area policy.

3 Navigating Post Vaccinations

As more and more of your employees receive the COVID-19 vaccine, you're on the road to reducing any workplace risks. You won't be able to completely resume your normal workday activities until your entire workforce is fully vaccinated.

However, as more people get fully vaccinated, some restrictions can be lifted as precautions are still being taken:

- Fully vaccinated individuals may not be mandated to wear face masks.
- Fully vaccinated individuals don't have to social distance .

Even though employees are getting vaccinated, some employers still ask their workforce to continue wearing masks and social distance regardless. To limit the spread as much as possible, here are some more precautions you can take even after receiving vaccinations.

- Mandate all visitors/ customers to wear masks when entering.
- Encourage employees to take sick leaves if they feel under the weather.
- Limit the capacity of visitors/ customers at a time.
- Turn people away if they don't comply with your procedures.





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sales@zenhr.com

KSA +966 55 790 7402

UAE +971 58 816 7685

JOR +962 6 577 7500

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