

[BIAS INTERRUPTERS] *small steps big change*

The information you provide when you request employees return to in-person work can prevent--or encourage--challenging situations and even legal liability. A successful return to in-person announcement will allay safety concerns, address legal compliance issues, and give employees the tools they need to return efficiently. Below find key points to consider in your announcement, and a model template to adapt as your own.

Key elements of a successful return announcement

Before you write your announcement, consider the pre-announcement steps laid out in our best practice document:

- [Get input from employees.](#)
- Decide on a target date for a return to in-person work.
- Make sure you understand the [legal requirements surrounding return to in-person work.](#)
- Create a workplace safety plan including vaccination and mask requirements. Make sure your policy is in compliance with all local, state, and federal laws.
- Review and revise your accommodations process. Refer to this list of [sample accommodations for in-person work.](#)
- Create a remote work/telework policy.

In the announcement, you should:

1. Refer to your survey data to show employees that their needs were considered.
2. Explain the details of your return:
 - a. Inform employees of the requirement to return to in-person work at least 45 days (preferably 60 days) in advance in order to make proper arrangements for caregiving, travel, appointments, and any other circumstances that may conflict with returning to the office. If possible, inform them of the earliest possible date they may be requested in-person sooner than 45 days before.
 - b. Provide employees with details about how the return to in-person work will take place. Note any scheduling changes or changes to the way the workplace is set up.
 - c. Set clear expectations about remote work and teleworking. If you are going to allow remote work or teleworking, attach your policy to the announcement.
 - d. Inform employees of any updates to your travel policies, if applicable.
3. Inform employees of safety measures put in place in order to keep employees protected and healthy. Link your workplace safety plan, any vaccination or mask policies you have created, and identify a coordinator that employees can contact for safety-related issues.
4. Identify accommodations that you are preparing to offer employees. Provide a point of contact for additional resources and to manage accommodation requests.
5. Provide additional employee resources [if any] or other relevant information.

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Sample Announcement that you can use or tweak:

Step 1: Introduction and Tone Setting

At _____, we are committed to fostering both a safe and productive work environment. Over the past year, it has become clear that some employees prefer remote work, while others prefer work on-site. We recognize that our company is most successful when our employees are able to work in a comfortable environment, and we also acknowledge that everyone's version of this looks different. According to our recent survey, _____. Given this information, we have decided to implement a [**choose option below**].

Step 2: Workplace Options

- A. hybrid model that gives our employees the option to choose which work environment best suits them. Employees may choose from the following options:

- 1) working in the office at least 3 days a week,
- 2) working in the office no more than 2 days a week, or
- 3) working remotely from home full-time.

Attached to this email is our detailed [link your policy here] [hybrid model policy](#).

The earliest date employees will be expected to return to the office is ____, to ensure that those who wish to return to the office have adequate time to make arrangements for any circumstances that may conflict with their return to in-person work.

- B. company-wide long-term remote work policy. Attached to this email is our detailed [link your policy here] [remote work policy](#).
- C. company-wide return to work policy. The earliest date employees will be required to return to the office is ____, to ensure that employees have adequate time to make arrangements.

Step 3: Safety Plan

In order to keep employees healthy and promote a safe work environment, workstations will be spread out, the office will be cleaned more frequently, and employees will be expected to follow both our safety plan (including our [link your policy here] [mask](#) and [link your policy here] [vaccination](#) policies), as well as state, federal, and local regulations, including quarantines, put in place if they choose to travel. The ability to work from home in the case of illness, quarantine, or other reasons will still be made available for those employees who typically work in the office.

_____ can be contacted at _____ for any COVID-19 safety concerns or comments related to the return to in-person work.

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Step 4: Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations related to in-person plans will be provided to employees who have disabilities or are pregnant, in accordance with state and federal law. Options may also be available for those who need to delay or adjust their return to in-person plan. Contact [insert HR accommodation staff] for assistance with accommodations.