Washington Reopening: Returning to the Workplace

Jordann Hallstrom

Christine Hawkins

Kate Tylee Herz

Gillian Murphy

Angela Vogel

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Our Plan Today



Identify issues for re-entry of the workforce



- Updates from Governor Inslee: Turning the Dial
- Health Screenings
- High-Risk Employees
- Rehiring Issues
- Leave Laws and Unemployment
- Employee Benefits Considerations

Update from Governor Inslee: Turning the Dial

Kate Tylee Herz

Guidance and Updates from Governor Inslee

- Update on "Stay Home, Stay Safe" Order
- Starting to "Turn the Dial"
 - Four-Phase Approach to Reopening WA
 - Phase One: Underway
 - In-Progress Construction
 - Certain Recreational Activities
 - Limited Businesses
 - Elective Medical Procedures



Re-Opening of "Non-Essential" Businesses





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P.O. Box 40002 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0002 • (360) 902-4111 • www.governor.wa.gov

PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR AMENDING PROCLAMATION 20-05

20-25

STAY HOME – STAY HEALTHY

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, I issued Proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a State of Emergency for all counties throughout the state of Washington as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in Washington State; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19, its significant progression in Washington State, and the high risk it poses to our most vulnerable populations, I

- Proclamation 20-05 (Stay Home— Stay Healthy Order)
 - Will re-open in "phases" or like "turning a dial"
 - Until a vaccine, "workplaces will look different" – physical distancing, teleworking, and other measures will continue to be necessary

WASHINGTON'S PHASED APPROACH

Modifying Physical Distancing Measures as we Reopen the State

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
High-Risk Populations*	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Continue to Stay Home, Stay Healthy	Resume public interactions, with physical distancing
Recreation	Some outdoor recreation (hunting, fishing, golf, boating, hiking)	Outdoor recreation involving 5 or fewer people outside your household (camping, beaches, etc.)	- Outdoor group rec. sports activities (50 or fewer people) - Recreational facilities at <50% capacity (gyms, public pools, etc.) - Professional sports without audience participation (horseracing, baseball, etc.)	Resume all recreational activity
Gatherings (social, spiritual)	- None - Drive-in spiritual service with one household per vehicle	Gather with no more than 5 people outside your household per week	Allow gatherings with no more than 50 people	Allow gatherings with >50 people
Travel	Essential travel and limited non-essential travel for Phase I permissible activities	Essential travel and limited non-essential travel for Phase I & II permissible activities	Resume non-essential travel	Continue non-essential travel
Business/ Employers	- Essential businesses open - Existing construction that meets agreed upon criteria - Landscaping - Auto/RV/boat/ORV sales - Retail (curb-side pick-up orders only) - Car washes - Pet walkers	- Remaining manufacturing - Additional construction phases - In-home/domestic services (nannies, housecleaning, etc.) - Retail (in-store purchases allowed with restrictions) - Real estate - Professional services/office-based businesses (telework remains strongly encouraged) - Hair and nail salons/barbers - Pet grooming - Restaurants/taverns < 50% capacity table size no larger than 5 (no bar-area seating)	- Restaurants/taverns < 75% capacity/ table size no larger than 10 - Bar areas in restuarant/taverns at < 25% capacity - Movie theaters at < 50% capacity - Customer-facing government services (telework remains strongly encouraged) - Libraries - Museums - All other business activities not yet listed except for nightclubs and events with greater than 50 people	- Nightclubs - Concert venues - Large sporting events - Resume unrestricted staffing of worksites, but continue to practice physical distancing and good hygiene

How Will the Phased Approach Work?

Minimum of three weeks per phase (one complete disease incubation period plus an additional week to compile complete data and confirm trends).

Every phase will still require social distancing and appropriate health precautions, including the use of personal protective equipment in a number of workplaces.

Industry-specific guidance and safety criteria are being developed to ensure workplace safety and public health are maintained. Workplace guidance will be available at the <u>state</u> <u>Department of Labor & Industries</u>.

Certain counties may request a variance to move to next phase earlier.

Readiness Dashboard

- Dashboard assesses readiness on a scale from "low risk" to "high risk" for the prevalence of the virus, the risk to vulnerable populations, testing capacity and availability, case and contact investigations, and healthcare readiness.
- While Washington is approaching "low risk" for health care readiness and virus prevalence, it remains in the "high risk" category for testing and contact tracing.



May 6 Update: COVID-19 Risk-Assessment Dashboard









Best Practices for Health Screening and Sanitation Procedures

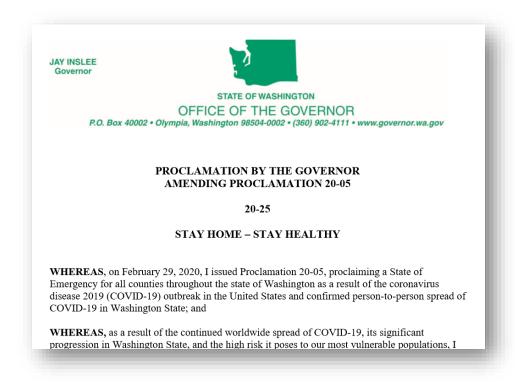
Kate Tylee Herz

Employee and Customer Safety



- This is a moving target!
- Creating a safe—and compliant—work environment
 - Changes to physical layouts and structures ("engineering controls")
 - Changes to policies and practices ("administrative controls")
 - Personal protective equipment ("PPE")
- "At the front door"—inquiries and testing
 - Options
 - Privacy
 - Procedures
- When something goes wrong—notifications

Social Distancing and Sanitation Measures



- Industry-specific guidance to be released gradually
- Proclamation 20-25: "must establish and implement social distancing and sanitation measures established by the United States Department of Labor or the Washington State Department of Health Guidelines."

Social Distancing and Sanitation Measures

Must follow:

- L&I Workplace Safety and Health Guidance
 - Specific guidelines for certain industries: agriculture, childcare, construction, food processing, janitorial/environmental services, truck drivers, longterm care workers, grocery and retail workers
- US DOL Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
- Washington DOH Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations

Social Distancing

- Place staff members at least 6 feet away from each other
- Do not have in-person meetings
- If you must have an in-person meeting, meet in a large room and remain at least 6 feet from one another. Meet for as short as you can.
- Close lunch rooms and limit access to areas where people gather
- Limit visitors

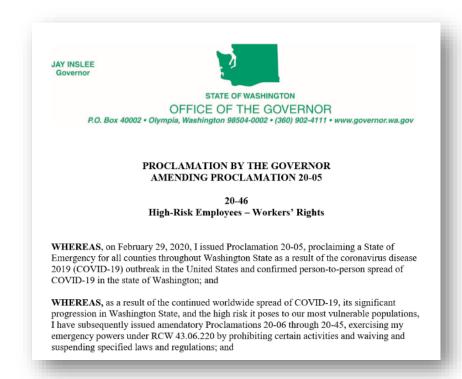
Sanitation Measures

- Clean all high touch areas (stair handrails, elevator buttons, fitness equipment, door handles)
- Provide cleaning wipes so that "high touch" objects can be wiped after use

High-Risk Employee Proclamation

Jordann Hallstrom

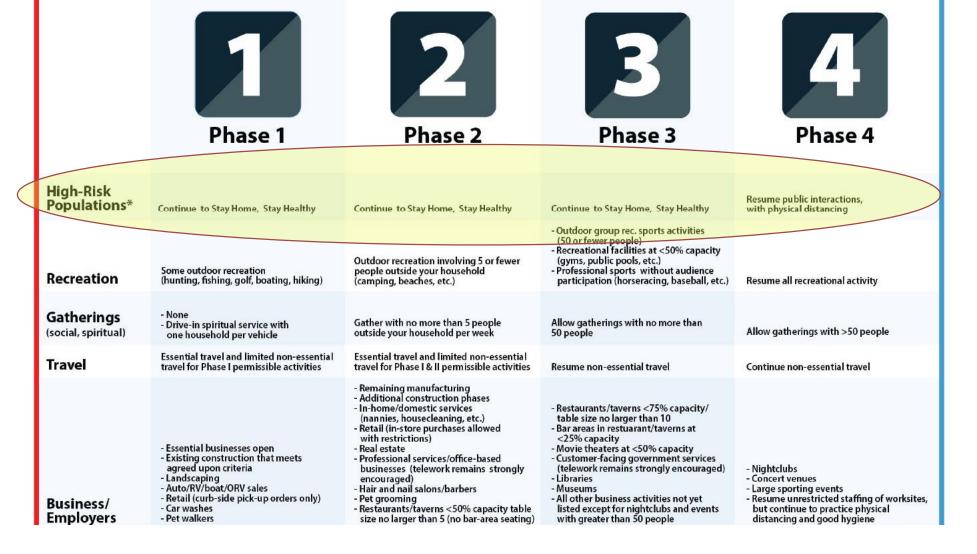
Proclamation for High-Risk Employees



- On April 13, 2020, Governor Inslee issued <u>Proclamation 20-46 "High-Risk Employees Workers' Rights"</u> (the Proclamation), which amends Proclamation 20-05 (Stay Home—Stay Healthy Order).
- Extends benefits and protections for "high-risk" employees.
- Remains in effect through at least June 12, 2020
 - "Safe Start Washington" indicates employers must follow Proclamation through all Phases

WASHINGTON'S PHASED APPROACH

Modifying Physical Distancing Measures as we Reopen the State



Who is a "high-risk" employee?

 A high-risk worker is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and includes persons who are:

Of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled; and/or

65 years of age or older.

 Proclamation does <u>not</u> apply to or cover employees who have family members or household members deemed "high-risk"

Must Employers Notify High-Risk Employees?

- There is <u>no requirement</u> that employers proactively notify employees of High-Risk Proclamation
 - Designed so that employees may approach employer
- What if employer wants to notify employees?
 - Do so cautiously, and to all employees
 - Be prepared to accommodate higher number of requests
 - Do <u>not</u> attempt to identify "high-risk" employees to single out for notification
 - Discrimination claims
- Cannot unilaterally bar "high-risk" workers
 - EEOC guidance: ADA requires interactive process
 - "Direct Threat" must show "the employee poses a significant risk of substantial harm to himself that cannot be reduced or eliminated by reasonable accommodation"



PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR AMENDING PROCLAMATION 20-05

20-46 High-Risk Employees – Workers' Rights

WHEREAS, on February 29, 2020, I issued Proclamation 20-05, proclaiming a State of Emergency for all counties throughout Washington State as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed person-to-person spread of COVID-19 in the state of Washington; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the continued worldwide spread of COVID-19, its significant progression in Washington State, and the high risk it poses to our most vulnerable populations, I have subsequently issued amendatory Proclamations 20-06 through 20-45, exercising my emergency powers under RCW 43.06.220 by prohibiting certain activities and waiving and suspending specified laws and regulations; and

Requirements for Employers

Accommodations: All employers (public or private) must offer accommodations to high-risk workers in order to protect them from exposure to COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to, telework, alternative or remote locations, reassignment, and social distancing measures.

Usage of Leave and Access to Unemployment: If alternative work arrangements are not feasible, the high-risk workers must be permitted to use any available employer-granted accrued leave or unemployment insurance (in any sequence at the employee's discretion) without risk of adverse employment actions. An employer cannot require that a high-risk worker use accrued leave prior to the worker applying for unemployment.

Job Protection: Employers are prohibited from retaliating or taking an adverse action against high-risk workers under this Proclamation, including terminating or replacing employees.

Union Employers: Employers and labor unions representing employees in Washington State are prohibited from applying or enforcing any employment contract provisions that contradict or otherwise interfere with the above prohibitions and the intent of this Proclamation.

High-Risk Employees that Do Not Want to Return to Work

Inquire the reason the employee does not want to return



"high-risk" ->
may request
documentation,
but cannot
reject
employees for
lack of
documentation

Document this process!



If employee refuses accommodations, must allow employee to access employer-sponsored leave or unemployment



Cannot terminate, and must continue benefits

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Requirements for Employers

- Benefits Continuation. "In the event the employee's paid time off exhausts during the period of leave, employers are prohibited from failing to fully maintain all employer-related health insurance benefits until the employee is deemed eligible to return to work."
- Employers must maintain health insurance for highrisk employees for duration of leave period
- Not limited to medical insurance
- ERISA preemption



Benefit Premiums

- Benefits Continuation Who Pays for the Premiums?
 - Can still require employees to pay for his/her share of premiums
 - However, if employee indicates he/she cannot pay, employer must cover the premiums
 - Can establish a reasonable repayment plan for employee



Gillian Murphy

Anything other than an immediate return to status quo ante ...

Potential for legal claims

Option 1: Allow employees to self-select

- Depending upon industry, demand may not be what it once was
- Resumption of operations may be gradual
- Personnel demands may operate at less than capacity
- Employees choose to return or stay home
- Be flexible within reason

Option 2: Use clear, legitimate criteria

- Focus on key positions/functions and staffing needs rather than specific individuals
- Selection based on non-discriminatory factors
 - Seniority
 - Particular skill set
 - Best performers
 - Team that works well together

- Under either option, be aware of the potential for disparate treatment
- DON'T assume
 - Woman with school-aged children would prefer to stay home
 - Older worker would prefer to stay home
 - Employee who complained about working conditions would prefer to stay home
- DO assume that you will have to explain/defend every reinstatement decision

Employees Who Are Reluctant to Return

Different approaches depending on status of employee and reason(s) for not returning:

Furloughed Employees – In most cases, approach like any other request for leave

- Obtain enough info to determine whether request must be approved (e.g. FFCRA, FMLA, high-risk, ADA, PFML)
- · If leave is not "protected," may separate employment
- · Qualifying for unemployment benefits does not necessarily mean "protected" leave

Laid-off Former Employees – In most cases, approach like new applicant

- Generally no obligation to offer FFCRA, FMLA, or any other protected leave or benefit
- May be required to consider accommodations

Still Won't Return?

- Share info about safety efforts
- Share understanding of UI benefits
- · Share that position may not be available in future

Leave Laws and Unemployment

Angela Vogel



Washington Sick and Safe Time

- Covers non-exempt employees
- Medical issues for employee or family member
- Includes quarantine and isolation, and care for family member
- School/place of care for children closed by public official
- Workplace closures by public official
- If PTO includes sick time, PTO balance available

Reinstatement

- If rehired within 12 months, balance must be reinstated
- If rehire occurs in subsequent calendar year, must only reinstate 40 hours (required carryover)

Seattle Sick and Safe Time

- Covers exempt and non-exempt employees
- Same uses as Washington Sick Time but amended in March 2020
- School/place of care closures for family members no public order required
- Employers with 250 FTE's Workplace slow downs or closures for any health or safety reason - no public order required

Reinstatement:

- If rehired within 12 months, balance must be reinstated
- If rehire occurs in subsequent calendar year, must reinstate required carryover amount (varies based on Tier size)





Seattle Sick and Safe Time Emergency Rule:

- Employers may not require a doctor's note because it is an unreasonable burden during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers must identify and provide alternatives to meet the verification requirement.
- Employee's own statement, or documentation from service providers, such as social workers, case managers, or legal advocates.
- In effect until June 7, 2020
- https://www.seattle.gov/laborstandards/ordinances/paidsick-and-safe-time

Vacation and PTO Considerations

- Balance reinstatement—Furlough vs. Layoff
- Policy-specific considerations
 - Waiting Period/ Eligibility for use—clock restart?
 - Accrual rates/length of employment—based on prior period of employment?
- If the PTO is meant to satisfy paid sick leave laws, there may be reinstatement requirements



Paid Family Medical Leave

- Partial wage replacement, available for serious health condition of employee or family member
- Leave could also be necessary to underlying condition (vs. COVID-19)
- Not available for school closures
- Portable benefit from employer to employer
- Must work 820 hours for Washington employers in qualifying period to be eligible
- Must provide employees with required written notice
- Long delays for approval



Paid Family Medical Leave



- Must be employed by the same employer for at least 1250 hours in the last 12 months to be eligible for the job restoration and benefits continuation protections.
- Employees with job restoration rights must receive written notice if they will not be restored to their position. (WAC 192-700-010).
- Notice must be provided in person or via certified mail.





Family Medical Leave Act

- Unpaid, available for serious health condition of employee or family member
- Employee eligibility:
 - Works at site with 50 or more employees within 75 miles;
 - Employed by same employer for at least 12 months;
 - Worked at least 1250 hours during prior 12 months for employer;
 - 12 months of employment do NOT need to be consecutive months.
- FFCRA in effect until December 31, 2020
 - Paid Sick Time
 - Paid leave for school/place of care closures

Benefits Overview

https://esdorchardstorage.blob.core.windows.net/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/newsroom/COVID-19/covid-19-scenarios-and-benefits.pdf

COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Availa Paid Sick Leave Paid Family & Unemployment COVID-19 Medical Leave Insurance Insurance (L&I) **SCENARIOS** Current Current Emergency Rule Current Current Law Worker is mildly ill with COVID-19. Worker is severely ill with COVID-19. Worker was exposed and quarantined. Business remains open. Worker is caring for sick family member. Schools are closed by a public official because of COVID-19 and worker has no child care. Worker is immune-compromised and advised to self-quarantine. Worker is following the advice of public health and government officials to selfquarantine and chooses not to go to work. Employer must shut down due to a quarantine by a public official. Employer shuts down due to a business slowdown or lack of demand. Employer reduces available hours due to business slowdown or lack of demand. Employer stays open in defiance of public health urging to close. Health care workers and first responder are under quarantine. **❤** YES The Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/ program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711

Unemployment Emergency Rules

- An individual is considered to have been "laid off due to lack of work" when:
- The individual is subject to a "Stay-Home Order" and does not have the ability to telework; OR
- The individual works for an "essential service" but does not have the ability to telework with pay, and the individual is:
 - A person identified by the CDC as high risk for severe illness from COVID-19;
 - In the same household as a person identified by CDC as high risk;
 - Providing direct care to a person identified by the CDC as high risk; OR
 - Working at a worksite that does not follow the rules or guidelines published state agencies for protecting workers from COVID-19 exposure.
- CDC High Risk: 65 or older or has certain underlying medical conditions:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html

Unemployment Overview – CARES Act

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance ("PUA") Extends benefits to those who would not otherwise qualify, such as the self-employed, underemployed, and those who have exhausted unemployment benefits. Must self-certify one of eleven COVID-19-related reasons applies.
- Emergency Increase in Unemployment Compensation ("EIUC") Adds \$600 to all weekly benefit payments through July 31, 2020, so long as the claimant would otherwise receive at least \$1.00 per week in benefits payments. Applies to PUA and PEUC programs.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation ("PEUC") Extends regular unemployment claims by an extra 13 weeks through December 2020.

Unemployment Overview – Eligibility Checker

ELIGIBILITY CHECKER	Sec	ployment urity partment INGTON STATE
Do I qualify for regular unemployment benefits?	YES	NO
Did you work at least 680 hours in your "base year?" Your base year is the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the week you apply for benefits.		
2. Did you work in Washington state sometime in the last 18 months?		
3. Are you able to work? Able to work means you are mentally and physically able to work.		
4. Are you available for work? Available to work means you are able to work without restrictions that would prevent you from accepting work (for example: transportation issues, illness, vacations, or lack of family/childcare).		
5. Were you laid off? Find out more about being laid off.		
6. Did you quit your job? Find out more about quitting.		
7. Were you discharged from the military in the last 18 months? Find out more.		
8. None of these statements apply to me. If none apply, select Yes. I was fired and it was my fault. Find out more about being at fault. I am on strike from my employer. I am on a leave of absence from my job. I am still working.		
If you answered Yes to MOST of these questions: You will likely qualify for regular unemployment benefits. Apply for benefits as soon as possible and we will review y application and decide if you qualify. To avoid mistakes and get paid faste please be sure to download the application checklist and read the information at essay.unemployment before applying.	our/	
If you answered ${f No}$ to MOST of these questions: You might not qualify for regular but could qualify for expanded benefits under the federal CARES Act during the CO pandemic. Complete the checklist on the next page to see if you could be eligible.	OVID-19	4.01.00
The Employment Security Deportment is on equal proporticity amplicar/proporum duralitors nide and sequires are available.	UPDATED: 0	4.21.20

The Employment Security Department is an equal apportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals



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Available at:

https://esdorchardstorage.blob.core.windows.net/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/Unemployment/UIEligibilityChecker.pdf

Employee Benefits Considerations

Christine Hawkins

Employee Benefits Considerations

- Remember to consider how returning employees will be treated under retirement and welfare plans
- Immediate participation in 401(k) plan
 - New elections
- If health coverage was not maintained, employers may waive waiting period
- Recent guidance gives employees extended period to elect COBRA for any
 - gap in coverage
- Join our employee benefits webinar on May 18th

Q&A

Thank You!











Jordann Hallstrom Christine Hawkins Kate Tylee Herz

jordannhallstrom@dwt.com

Associate, Bellevue

Counsel, Bellevue

Gillian Murphy

gillianmurphy@dwt.com

Angela Vogel

Associate, Seattle

Partner, Seattle Counsel, Bellevue

206.757.8067

christinehawkins@dwt.com 425.646.6112

katetyleeherz@dwt.com 425.646.6122

206.757.8109

angelavogel@dwt.com 425.646.6155