

Perkins&Will

# Road Map for Return

Guidance for a return to the office during COVID-19

04.23.2020

# Overview

Every organization is working towards a phased approach to returning to offices during the response to COVID. We are partnering with clients to help them navigate a **roadmap for safe return** that requires a multifaceted approach to planning and change.

**Grounded in public health guidance**, this set of guidelines encompasses several important considerations in moving from a response to transition phase, then towards a recovery phase once workplace restrictions are lifted in various regions.

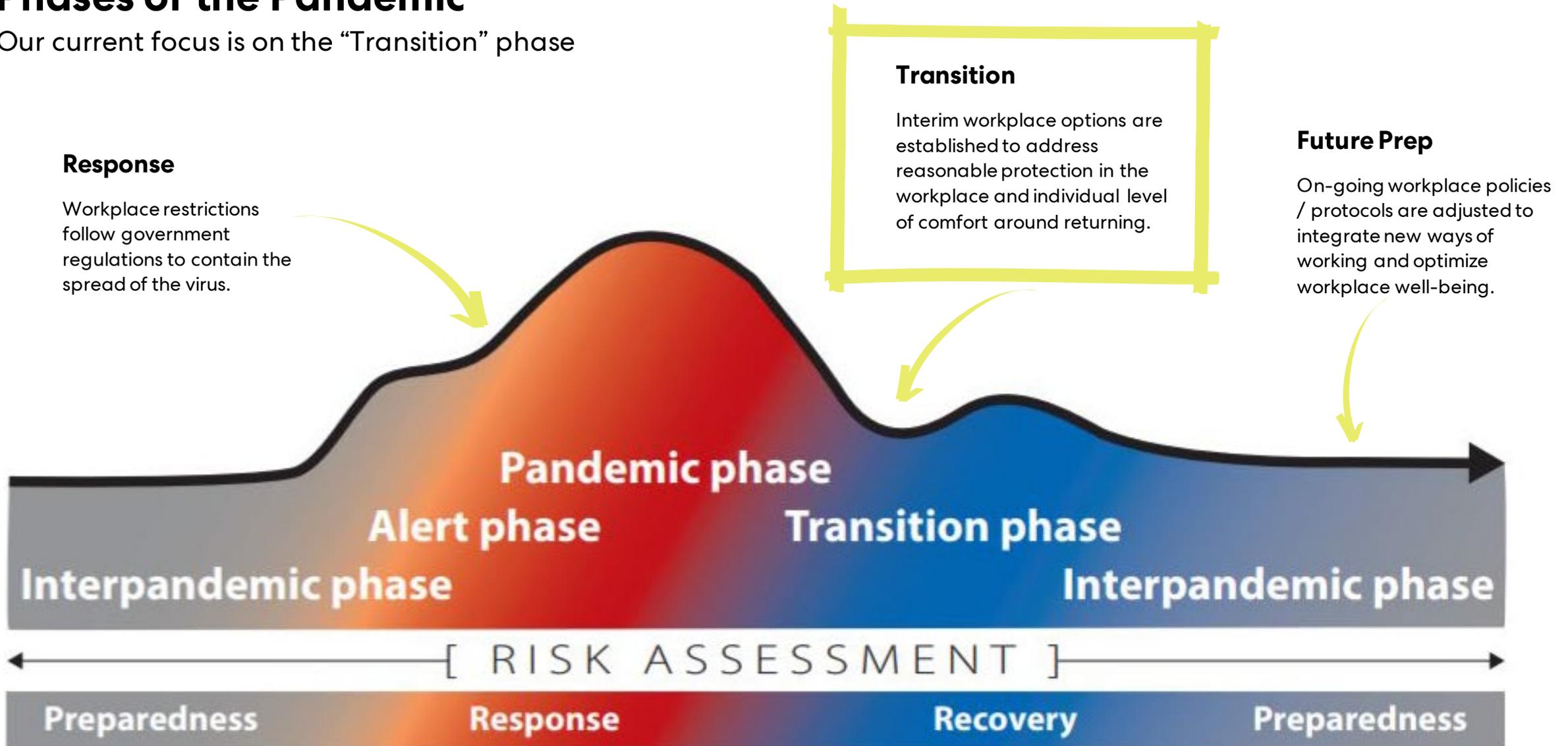
Guidance includes recommendations on employee readiness, maximum seat capacity, team scheduling scenarios, prioritizing business needs, and remote work. Additionally, recommendations include considerations on physical distancing analysis, office protocols, along with suggested behaviors and messages that should be incorporated into every planning phase to provide **a safe, healthy, and resilient return to the office.**

This introductory package includes guidance on how to:

1. Understand the **phases** of the pandemic
2. Develop a **framework** for return
3. Understand the **risks** of returning
4. Assess employee **readiness**
5. Determine your facility's **capacity**
6. Identify **who returns** first
7. Evaluate continued **remote work**
8. Consider **scheduling** strategies
9. Implement **operational changes**
10. Reinforce **behaviors & messages**

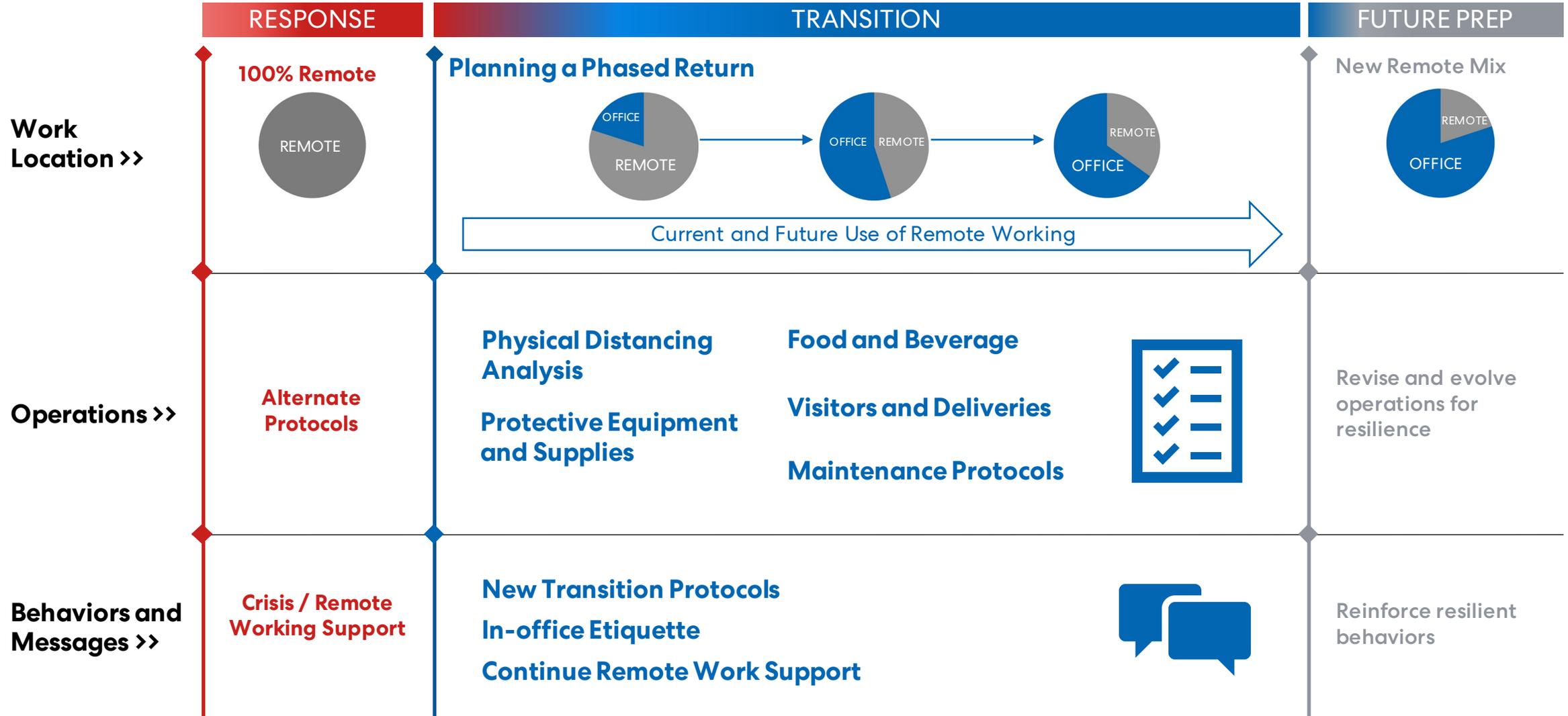
# Phases of the Pandemic

Our current focus is on the “Transition” phase



# Return to Work Road Map

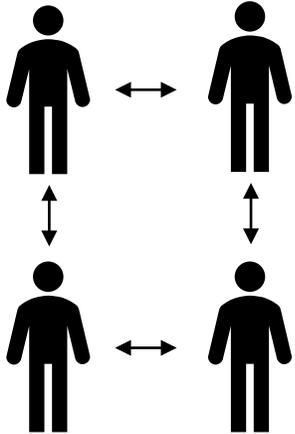
The path back to work includes where we work, how we operate, communications, and behaviors through each phase.



# Following the question of when to return is how to plan our return.

## 1 Establish office capacity

- 6 ft. distancing
- floor maximum
- scheduling options



## 2 Plan employee return approach

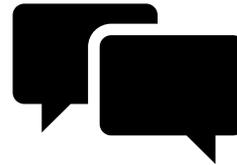
- volunteer-based process
- on-site support
- client needs



**Safety and health are the only priorities**

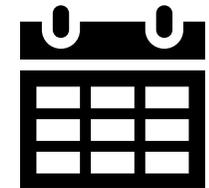
## 3 Establish & communicate new office protocols

- food & beverage
- visitors
- deliveries
- maintenance



## 4 Return to office

- Reinforce new behaviors
- operate under transition protocols



# Office design and protocols can't address every hazard when returning to work. When we leave our homes there will be risks.

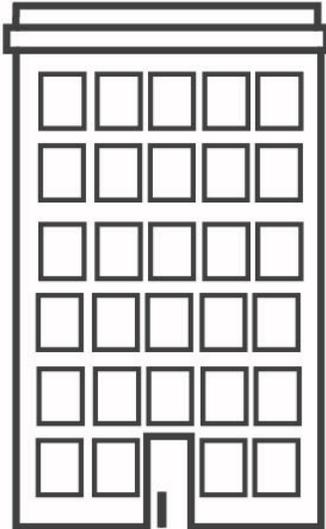
## Commute

potential to isolate for some



## Building Entry

paths converge / high touch surfaces



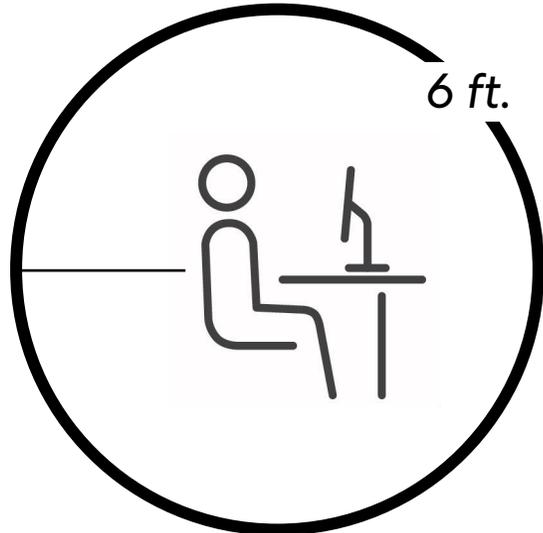
## Elevator / Stairs

close quarters / high touch surfaces



## Workplace

designed and managed for physical distance



# Even if the office is ready, are employees?

- Employees will not have the same **comfort level** about returning to an office environment.
- Employees will not have the same **ability** to return:
  - availability of childcare
  - Reduced public transportation service
  - the need to care for others
  - increased risk due to health conditions
- The message must be clear that it is **ok to defer your return** and no reason is needed.
- Set a **cadence for asking for return volunteers**.
- Consider an **employee survey** to gauge their interest and concerns.
- **Talk to your legal team** to see if a waiver is needed from employees.



# How many people could come back into the office safely?

- There are *currently* no guidelines on how many people to phase into the office other than general **physical distancing guidelines** (e.g. 6 ft separation).
- Based on distance, evaluate the number of workstations and collaboration **seats that can be occupied simultaneously**.

# workstations @ 6 ft.

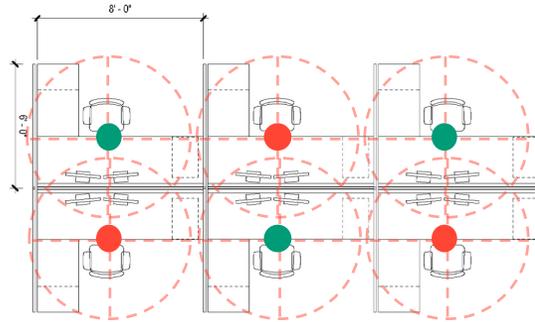
+ # private offices

+ # collab seats @ 6 ft. re-purposed as work seats

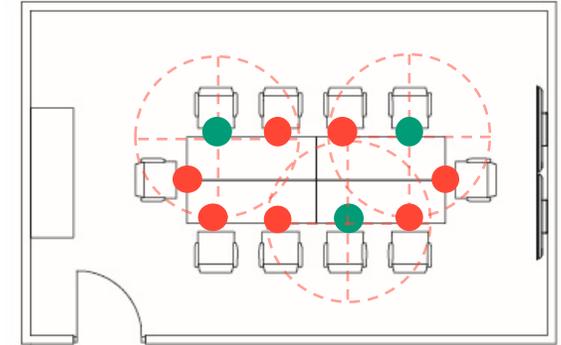
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= **maximum capacity**

- Establish a **maximum capacity based on physical distance guidelines for each floor to ensure that shared spaces** such as restrooms, pantries, and meeting spaces are not overwhelmed.

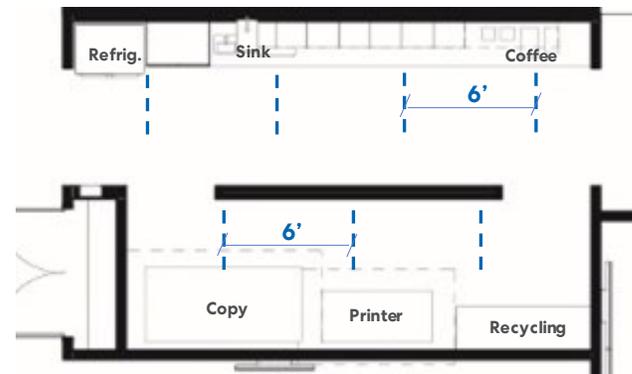
## Physical Distancing Analysis Diagrams



Workstations



Enclosed Rooms



Shared Amenities

### Planning Key

● Workspace that can be occupied

● Workspace unavailable

--- 6 ft. distance guidance floor line

⊙ 6 ft. radius

# How many people should come back into the office initially?

- Once you have the maximum capacity per floor, then **set an initial target capacity** as a percentage of that maximum.
- **Be conservative to start.** There more risks than benefits when maximizing capacity. You will likely **adjust your space and protocols** after the initial return.
- **20% to 40% of your maximum capacity** per floor may be a good range to test new measures before increasing the office population.
- The number of employees who volunteer to return to the office may exceed your target capacity. Create a **transparent decision process to determine who comes back** and when. And if you don't have enough volunteers to reach your target that's ok.



# Evaluate your remote work program

Now that remote working has become a way of life for all employees, **determine what remote work should look like** for your organization going forward.

- **Employee surveys** can determine quality of experience and interest in remote working:
  - Data will identify employees who can: work from home, be part of hybrid teams, or be fully back in-office.
- Identify where and how remote working been **most effective** for your workforce.
  - When employees adopt virtual technologies for workflows and communications, efficiencies may be realized.
- **Identify what remains challenging** from a people, process, technology and culture perspective.
  - Survey data & focus groups yield additional feedback; as will 1:1 meetings between managers and employees.



# Scheduling strategies to consider

## Alternating Days

Creating groups with **assigned days to be in office** is an option for increasing the number of employees who get to be in the office while maintaining physical distance guidelines.

For example:

Group A (Monday, Thursday)

Group B (Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday)

## Working in Shifts

- Working in **non-overlapping shifts** may be an option for some business functions
- **Staggering work hours** may relieve congestion at peak hours:

## Unassigned Assigned Seating

In any alternative scheduling strategy, we are advising clients to **avoid sharing desks**.

Consider using only **assigned seats** during the transition phase.

**CDC recommends** that employees not share desks, offices or equipment when possible.

If you previously had an unassigned or agile seating strategy, consider putting it on hold until after the Transition phase.

# Operations Considerations

In the Transition phase, we will all need to **rethink our operations** to provide a safe workplace.

- Provide **protective equipment and supplies**
- Adjust **food and beverage** services
- Implement new protocols for **guests and deliveries**
- Enact new **maintenance** protocols, including cleaning and sanitization



# Behaviors & messages: Our words matter

It seems **communications have been non-stop** since COVID-19 changed our world. Going forward communications will continue to be critical as we return to a workplace that will not resemble the one we left in March.

## New communications should include:

- Printed signs and reminders
  - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
- Instructions on new processes and procedures
- Guidance on our health and safety in the office
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/index.html>
- Additional support for working in distributed teams
- Messages of inspiration, positivity, and compassion



**Our recommendations are advisory and intended to assist as you plan for the return your workforce. Guidance is evolving and we urge you to regularly consult with the following sources:**

**World Health Organization**



<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)**



<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

**Federal, State & Local Guidance**



<https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus> or <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

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**We are in this together.**