

ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTIONS FOR OFFICES POST-PANDEMIC

A guide to creating an office environment that reduces the spread of communicable illness and supports the physical and emotional health of employees during and after a national pandemic like COVID-19

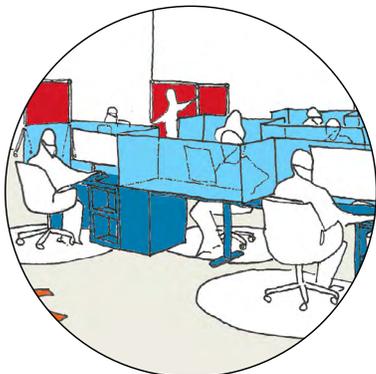
When returning to the workplace how do you address employees' needs to feel physically and emotionally secure? How can architecture and space planning help reduce viral transmission and promote a sense of security, safety, and control that leads to a healthier workplace and contributes to the sense that everyone is doing their part?

In this guide we will explore both short- and long-term design methods, material and product solutions, and management practices to help bolster physical safety and employee confidence when returning to the workplace.

Defining measurable goals such as reduced transmission of all communicable diseases as well as intangible goals like boosted employee morale, this guide seeks to relieve workers' anxiety and increase feelings of personal security through architectural and space planning solutions.



SOLUTIONS THROUGH DESIGN



PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Employees and employee workstations should remain at least 6' feet apart. Reducing occupancy to 50% or working in rotating shifts can allow for the proper amount of distance between employees. Reworking your open office floorplan to address density with space planning allows for maximum occupancy at appropriate social distances.

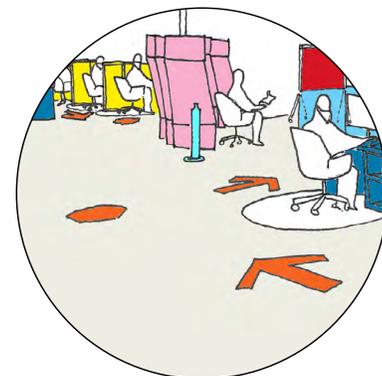
COMMUNAL SHARED SPACES

Short-term solutions include removing chairs from conference rooms and training spaces to control the number of attendees in meetings or re-purposing these spaces to accommodate individual workstations. Provide easily accessible sanitizing products and signs that remind staff to frequently use them in shared areas like kitchens and workrooms. Consider turning multiple occupancy restrooms into private restrooms with the use of occupancy signs.



CLEAR TRAVEL PATHS

Create clear, directional ingress and egress pathways to avoid contact between staff. Ensure that the pathways provide ADA accessibility.* Seek out permanent or temporary solutions for each type of flooring including vinyl application for hard surface flooring and custom cut directional arrows and stop signs for carpet flooring.



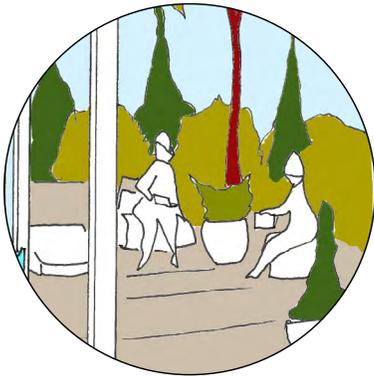
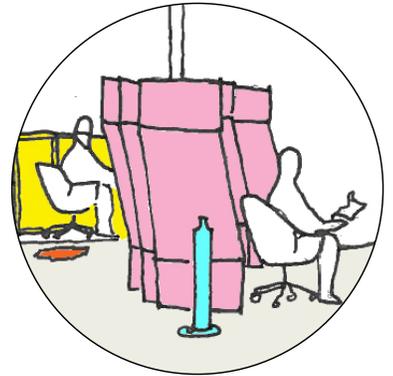
SANITIZING STATIONS

Stand alone hands-free sanitizing stations positioned in strategic locations throughout the office space encourage good practices. Stations come in variety of sizes and colors to match your office space.

SOLUTIONS THROUGH DESIGN (CONT.)

PRIVATE COMMUNAL SPACES

Create physical private spaces away from communal work areas for virtual meetings for employees to connect with clients or staff working from home.



OUTDOOR SPACES

Take advantage of natural daylight and increased airflow by using outdoor spaces to hold physically distanced meetings and breaks. Provide seating at least 6' apart in these spaces.

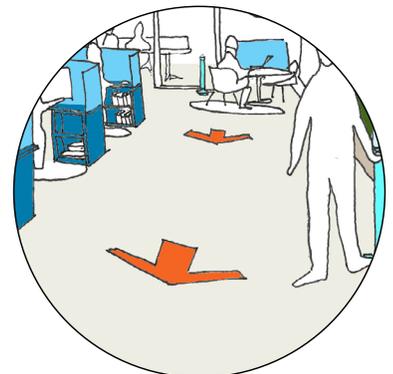
TECHNOLOGY

Within private meeting spaces, provide power and multi-media outlets. Consider use of permanent screens in these areas that can be connected via hands-free screen sharing or AirPlay.



SIGNAGE

Promote healthy hand washing and personal hygiene practices through signage. Direct staff and clients to sanitizing stations. Post reminders to thoroughly clean communal spaces after each use. Use occupancy signs for restrooms and other previously communal spaces.



SOLUTIONS THROUGH MATERIALS/PRODUCTS

CLEANABLE SURFACES

Provide cleanable, transparent films over surfaces like elevator buttons and other highly used communal surfaces. Install physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards.*

MATERIALS WITH ANTIMICROBIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Materials such as copper, brass, bronze, nickel, and others are natural antimicrobial materials that have intrinsic properties to destroy a wide range of microorganisms.**

HANDS FREE DEVICES

Replace manual door locks and handles with touchless entry systems, light switches with occupancy sensors, faucet handles with touchless devices, towel and soap dispensers with touchless dispensers. Employ technology that allows for hands-free screen sharing or AirPlay.

HVAC FILTRATION

Increase ventilation and air changes. Create negative air pressure. Consider having a fixed maximum number of occupants per HVAC zone. Change HVAC filters prior to re-occupancy. Consider the use of portable room air cleaners with HEPA filters.*

SOLUTIONS THROUGH MANAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION

Develop an emergency communications plan. Identify necessary revisions to human resources policies. Provide up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.*

ENCOURAGING GOOD PRACTICES

Post hygiene signage. Provide tissues, touchless hand soap, towel dispensers, and garbage can. Provide readily available alcohol-based sanitizer and disinfectants. Educate staff on respiratory etiquette. Encourage self-monitoring for symptoms.*

STAFFING PLANS

Implement occupancy-reduction policies including alternating days or shifts to reduce total number of employees in the workplace at a given time. Define telework policies.*

SEEKING ASSISTANCE

If you need help creating and implementing any of these changes or new policies, reach out to your local architects, designers, or business organizations (REV Birmingham, Birmingham Business Alliance) for guidance.

Sources: * [AIA ReOccupancy Assessment Tool](#); ** [Antimicrobial Surfaces](#)

Disclaimer: CCR Architecture & Interiors does not practice medicine, nor does it provide medical advice. Please discuss medical questions with your physician or other qualified healthcare providers.