

RISK Alert

ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS FOR BOND POLICYHOLDERS.



Alert Type

Awareness

Watch

Warning

Minimizing Negative Staff Impact When Getting Back To The Office

Similar to when employees began working remotely, there are peripheral issues and concerns to consider as a larger percentage of the staff return to the office. One recent poll suggests nearly half of the workers feel anxious about their own health, mental well-being, and the health of their families when going back to the workplace. As with all workplace safety and health efforts, staying safe will be the combined effort of employers taking the right steps to reduce risk, remain flexible if possible, and maintain strong communications with employees.

Details

Credit unions returning to more normal branch operations and onsite staffing levels may see an increase in stress and the mental well-being of their employees. As staff settled in and became acquainted with a new business model – during the pandemic – many became more receptive to more flexible work arrangements and relaxed atmospheres including dress, eating patterns, and flexibility. Employees may worry that many of these conveniences will disappear as they return to the office.

Other potential issues could include their children's school system model, at risk family and friends who could still be struggling, and even detachment from their pets. In addition, COVID-19 and the accompanying protocols (masks, vaccines, safe distancing, and office set-up) could still be a concern of employees returning to the workplace and even impact their overall productivity.

Each employee's experience of working remotely has been unique and understanding the impact it has had on each person's physical and mental well-being will help determine who is ready to return to the office. To maximize personal productivity and job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover, it will be critical to find the right balance for employees going forward.

There will obviously be different approaches for returning to the credit union workplace. Most will either be a full-time return to the physical office for all; or a flexible hybrid approach with some employees in-office and some working from home. In addition, some departments may even go with a fully-remote approach.

No matter your approach, your credit union should be prepared for employee concerns. Take measures that welcome the input of all, show empathy and sensitivity, and be prepared to deescalate situations if necessary. You may also consider having people managers undergo additional support training on detecting mental health concerns and how to talk with employees about challenges.

Date: June 17, 2021

Risk Category: Employee Safety; Wellness; Employment Practices; Pandemic

States: All

Share with:

- Branch Operations
- Executive Management
- Human Resources
- People Leaders
- Risk Manager



Facing risk challenges?

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Minimizing Negative Staff Impact When Getting Back To The Office

Leadership should start by identifying their own biases and recognizing how their personal feelings could impact company policy. Be open to:

- Problem-solving with your employees
- Staying flexible in the face of changes that may come more quickly than usual
- Communicating what is and isn't working

No matter what path your organization takes back to the office, you should ensure a healthy and happy return with a solid return to the office game plan. But a one-size-fits-all plan for a return to the workplace does not exist. Your credit union's approach with employees can show that you are a forward-thinking organization and one that values the health and productivity of its workforce.

Risk Mitigation

The truth is, the return to work will look different for every organization. Local procedures will play a part in determining what the journey looks like, but ultimately each credit union needs to find a unique solution for its people. Remember, that without employee buy-in, even the best-built plans are likely to run into trouble.

Credit unions should consider these action steps:

- Recognize that employees will need time to adapt to new ways of working post-pandemic. Returning to a workplace may require a mindset shift for those who've adjusted to working remotely. Make sure employees understand what's being asked of them and what steps you're taking to protect their health and wellness.
- Acknowledge the transition challenges including providing mental health resources when necessary
- Build a framework for reopening plans to take the variety of employee emotions and sentiments into consideration
- Practice clear and consistent two-way communication with all employees
- Stay open to considering flexible work arrangements
- Embrace a culture of self-care, when lives become overwhelming and busy, it is easy to lose sight of making self-care a priority
- Consider offering mental health days
- Provide manager support training
- Keep a pulse on the team members through informal discussions or staff surveys
- Promote a stigma-free workplace
- Build upon collaboration between all stakeholders

Risk Prevention Resources

Access CUNA Mutual Group's [Protection Resource Center](#) at [cunamutual.com](#) for exclusive risk resources to assist with your loss control efforts – such as [Rethinking Protection: People, Assets & Reputation](#) and other resources and checklists within the Workplace Safety / Wellness or Employment Practices page. The Protection Resource Center requires a User ID and password.

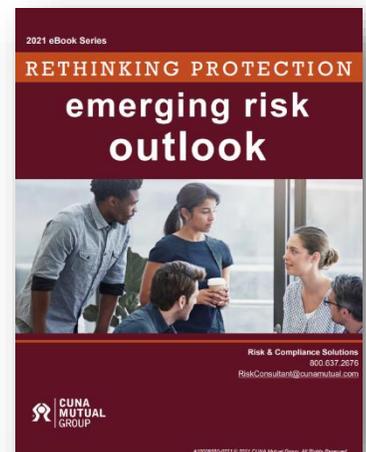
Access the resources at [www.epl-risk.com](#) that are exclusively available for CUNA Mutual Group Employment Practices Liability policyholders. If you're not sure how to access...review [Quick Start Registration Guide](#).



Access the Protection Resource Center for exclusive resources:

- [Loss Prevention Library](#) for resources & checklists
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The Protection Resource Center requires a User ID and Password.



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