

MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGHS **RESEARCH SUMMARY**

TOPIC: MANAGING BACK TO WORK STRESS DURING COVID
REPORT: MB #4819

BACKGROUND: In March, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and a public health threat. In an attempt to prevent the virus from spreading and limit exposure many shelter-in-place rules were enacted and safer at home was encouraged to everyone who had the resources to do so. At this point many people began to work remotely from home and have been doing so for the majority of 2020. Thirty-one percent of workers who were employed in early March switched to work from home by the first week of April. Although the stay at home orders have relaxed and been fully lifted in some areas, many have continued to work remotely. Now as many people consider returning or are being asked by employers to return to the workplace, anxiety and worry about risk of infection is high.
(Source: <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2020/article/ability-to-work-from-home.htm>)

PREVENTION: Many shared workplaces are assessing their risks and creating safety and prevention practices to ease anxiety and allow employees to safely return to the workplace. Preventative workplace safety measures include ensuring building ventilation systems are operating correctly and effectively, increasing circulation of outdoor air whenever possible, identifying common work areas where employees could come in close contact with each other. Also, modifying seats, furniture, and workstations for more distance, installing plastic shields or barriers to separate employees, replacing high contact items such as coffee and snacks with individual pre-packaged items, removing chairs to maintain social distancing, applying tape on floors and walls to enforce social distancing and so on. Businesses are also encouraged by the Centers for Disease Control to conduct daily health checks, encourage employees with symptoms or are feeling unwell to stay home, provide employees with personal protective equipment such as masks and disinfectant, staggering shifts, and posting signage in common areas and entrances reminding employees of safety measures.
(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>)

NEW NORMAL: On a daily basis, employers and employees should practice active safety precautions. This includes disinfecting high touch surfaces such as surfaces, doorknobs, faucets, toilets, telephones, keyboards, workstations, counters, desks, handrails, printers, copiers, pens and writing utensils, and drinking fountains. If surfaces are dirty, clean them with soap and water and let dry completely before applying disinfectant. Only use disinfectants that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. Follow all instructions on products including quantity to use and proper amount of time it needs to be left on a surface to be disinfected. Give employees time to wash hands and access to clean water soap and paper towels. Remind employees to wash hands for at least 20 seconds and only use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
(Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT:

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If this story or any other Ivanhoe story has impacted your life or prompted you or someone you know to seek or change treatments, please let us know by contacting Marjorie Bekaert Thomas at mthomas@ivanhoe.com