



## COVID-19 Temporary Layoff Checklist

Given the unique circumstances of a coronavirus-related temporary layoff, you may want to consider every aspect of this process from the standpoint of “we sincerely hope that we can get back up and running just as soon as possible.” It will be important to treat those who are being laid off and those who continue working with the utmost dignity and respect. Always remember that effective communications go a long way in maintaining trust in the company and its leadership team. In this situation, more than ever, it is critical that the executive leadership team be front and center. If handled appropriately, your messaging will convey to employees, their families, and your community why you made the decision that you did, that you didn’t have any other choice, and that you value everyone who is part of your team. Your planning and management of this layoff process will go a long way in determining whether your employees want to come back to work for you when this pandemic is behind us.

While not all-inclusive, we hope that you find this checklist helpful.

### Planning

- Identify a confidential decision-making project team (representatives of stakeholder mgt., HR, public relations, and legal)
- Develop a roles-and-responsibilities matrix
- Research and stay abreast of the latest developments impacting layoffs from the local, state, and federal level
- Establish regular review and status-check meetings
- Determine and document the business reason for layoff
- Conduct cost analysis to determine extent of need
- Consider if there are any alternatives to achieve same desired result (overtime reduction, reduced work weeks, voluntary unpaid time off, etc.)
- Determine timing for layoffs
- Determine scope (number and positions of employees to be affected at designated location)
  - If you are implementing a partial layoff, determine which positions are critical
  - Think through the work being assigned from a wage-and-hour perspective and consider other legal implications
  - If there are employees who will remain working at your location, ensure:
    - Social distancing guidelines are being followed
    - Cleanliness and sanitation of your workplace
    - Protocols are in place in the event someone tests positive
- Determine application of WARN Act obligations
- Decide criteria for determining which employees will be laid off

## For Identified Affected Positions

- Confirm employment-at-will status for affected positions
- Prepare and review initial list of affected employees
- Prepare final list of affected employees
- Legal review of selection process

## Layoff Plan

- Prepare detailed plan and timeline
- Determine benefits available to laid-off employees given recent and rapidly changing guidance at the local, state, and/or federal level
- Determine guidelines, if any, for re-employment
- Determine policy impact and revise policies as needed (reassignments of remaining employees, etc.)
- Finalize and obtain executive approval of plan content and timeline
- Legal review of layoff criteria and plan

## Communications

- Develop internal and external communications plan and timeline/schedule
- Draft and send WARN Act notices, if applicable
- Develop key communication points regarding reason for layoffs
- Determine communications plan and content
- Develop communications content and Q & A for internal and external use
- Ensure internal and external messages align
- If the situation and time permit, educate management on layoff plan, communications plan, and content
- Select a point person (spokesperson) for communications, questions, etc. (internal and external)
- Develop scripts for use by internal communicators
- Cascade communication according to plan and schedule (including group and/or one-on-one meetings with impacted employees and all non-impacted employees)
- Provide resource(s) for employee questions (unemployment insurance, benefit continuation, etc.)
- Determine the communication methods and tools that will be used to communicate with employees who have been laid off
- Coordinate communications between other locations and with your parent company, if applicable
- Legal review of all communications

## Key Stakeholder Considerations

- Ensure close coordination and communications with (not all-inclusive):
  - Staffing agencies
  - On-site service providers such as food service, security, PPE providers, janitorial, etc.
  - External vendors such as benefits, insurance, HRIS, and payroll providers
  - Recruiting firms
  - Candidates in your hiring process (decide if you will hire, postpone)
- Develop a list of key vendors including a primary and secondary contact name and cell phone numbers

## Implementation

- If time and the situation permit, conduct a meeting or alternate communication with employees on last day of work before layoff begins
- Confirm contact information for employees
- Provide management visibility to thank employees
- Collect any company equipment or supplies from employees (if appropriate)
- Provide resource name and contact information for employee questions post-layoff  
Share best practices with other locations (if applicable)
- Document this process, the steps you took, and the decision you made