Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

Developmental Disabilities Administration

COVID-19 Return to Employment Services: Guidelines

Purpose: To assist employment and residential providers in determining a safe plan for a client to return to employment services.

Consider including the following individuals in discussions and planning efforts:

- Client
- Guardian/Legal Representative
- Residential Staff
- Employment Support Staff/County Coordinator
- DDA Case Manager
- Others as identified by the client (employer, coworkers, friends, etc.)

Consider the client's level of interest and concerns with restarting employment services:

- Ask the client –
  - Their thoughts about returning to work?
  - What they are looking forward to when returning to work?
  - What they are worried about when returning to work?

If the client is not interested in returning to employment services at this time, develop a plan and timeline for follow up.

Client risk considerations:

- A medical or mental health professional has assessed the client's health risk and made recommendations regarding the client returning to work
- General health status – including any underlying medical conditions
- Risk of losing their job if the client does not resume work
- Dependency on the income
- Impact on working/not working on other benefits
- Physical distancing
- Available appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) from the employer

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Supports needed to follow safety precautions:

- Safe Start plans and guidance for reopening on precautions.
- Washington State's Phased Approach
- DSHS' Residential Care Services' Safe Start Recommendations and Requirements: Certified Community Residential Services and Support such as:
  - Wearing face covering
  - Wearing gloves
  - Handwashing
  - Using non-toxic hand sanitizer
  - Limiting touching surfaces
  - Social distancing
- Required return to work training and any additional training and/or follow-up plan for a safe return to work
- Determine if close contact from employment support staff or co-workers is needed to complete work tasks and develop a safety plan if necessary

Home risk considerations:

- Household established protocols for living with COVID – 19 comply with Safe Start Recommendations and Requirements: Certified Community Residential Services and Support, DOH Guidelines, and related Safe Start Precautions.
  - Determine how to reduce the impact to other housemates and what can be done to lessen that impact. *Please be mindful of the protection of personal health information during these discussions*.
  - Develop plans in the event the client or another household member becomes symptomatic or ill with COVID-19.
  - Address concerns from housemates or housemates' guardians about the client's return to work and develop a plan to address these concerns

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Purpose: To safely support clients to return to work and employment services

Employer specific guidelines for safety considerations:

For each location, consider the employer's COVID-19 safety plans, their compliance with Governor's proclamations, DOH guidelines and related risk-of-exposure in the working environment.

- Location, nature of the business and nature of the client's job within the workplace.
- Approximate size of location/business, number of employees and other persons typically in the client's workspace.
- Written employer COVID-19 safety plans or guidelines.
- Number of times per week client is at the workplace and duration per work shift.

Health status at home prior to work considerations:

Discuss how the client or staff will monitor health status before leaving home to access community environments including the following information:

- Client does not currently have COVID-19
- Client is not sick and has not used medication to control symptoms of COVID-19 (CDC Symptoms: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea) for the 72 hours prior to returning to work
- No contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days (Residential Care Services' Safe Start Recommendations and Requirements: Certified Community Residential Services and Support)
- Plan for COVID-19 testing as necessary

Transportation considerations:

- Number of individuals traveling in a vehicle
- Is travel with household members or paid support staff?
- Is the vehicle being used for other individuals? If so, is it cleaned between users?
- Ability to maintain maximum physical distance
- Ability to open windows
- Length of time traveling
- Ability of client and others to adhere to safety precautions (physical distance, use of masks, limiting touching of surfaces, etc.)
- PPE use and sanitization practices while accessing private vehicles or public transportation

COVID-19 Return to Employment Services: Guidelines

Purpose: To safely support clients to return to work and employment services

Protection measures for returning home considerations:

- Practices the client can exercise when returning home each day to decrease the risk of exposing other household members:
  - washing hands
  - showering
  - changing clothes
  - washing face covering
  - wearing covering
  - physical distancing
  - taking temperature
  - self-quarantining for 14 days following exposure (Residential Care Services' Safe Start Recommendations and Requirements: Certified Community Residential Services and Support)
- Discuss contingency plans and communication protocols should a client choose not to follow protection measures to keep other clients and residential staff in the home safe