



MEMBER SURVEY: RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE

 **THE COUNCIL**
The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers

RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE SURVEY RESULTS

The Council of Insurance Agents & Brokers fielded a “Return to the Workplace” survey to gauge how various CIAB-member brokerage firms are approaching their reopening strategies in the midst of COVID-19. Survey data was collected from June 1 – June 10 with 121 responses from 31 states and the District of Columbia. Firm size varied from under 100 to over 5,000 total employees, while the majority (60%) of branches contain 101-500 employees.

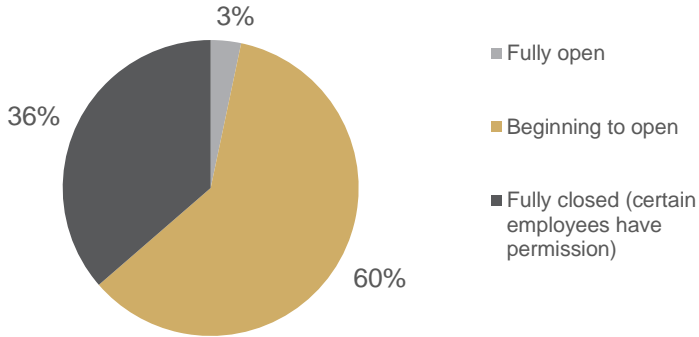
REOPENING STATUS

In order to make proactive, strategic decisions around office reopening and what that process might look like, respondents’ firms formed leadership committees, conducted company-wide surveys, and utilized state, county and nation-wide guidelines and best practices. Respondents agreed that surveys were critical in gauging employee comfort levels around the transition to reopening, home/work life balance, social distance practices, use of PPE, and more. It was evident throughout the survey that an overwhelming majority of employees were able to successfully transition to a remote working environment in the midst of the pandemic. Going forward, as offices begin to reopen, it’s clear many employees will have the flexibility to return to the office as they see fit.

As one respondent from Indiana explained, “We have been operating pretty effectively in our remote environment. While not ideal from a collaboration standpoint, our first priority is to keep our associates safe and healthy. So we have been in no rush to get everyone back into the office. We are looking at a phased approach to opening our office.”

When asked the current operating status of their specific branch, 60% of respondents’ branches were in the processes of opening, while 36% remained fully closed (although certain employees may have permission). Just four respondents (3%) noted their branch had fully opened at the time of the survey.

What is the current status of your office/branch location?



Although responses varied, often based on state, when asked of strategies firms are taking to reopening, many respondents explained a “phased” or “teams” approach, often adhering to state and county guidelines. This phased approach, explained one respondent, “begins with skeleton staff required to perform key operations and client tasks; followed by limited staff to support client services.”

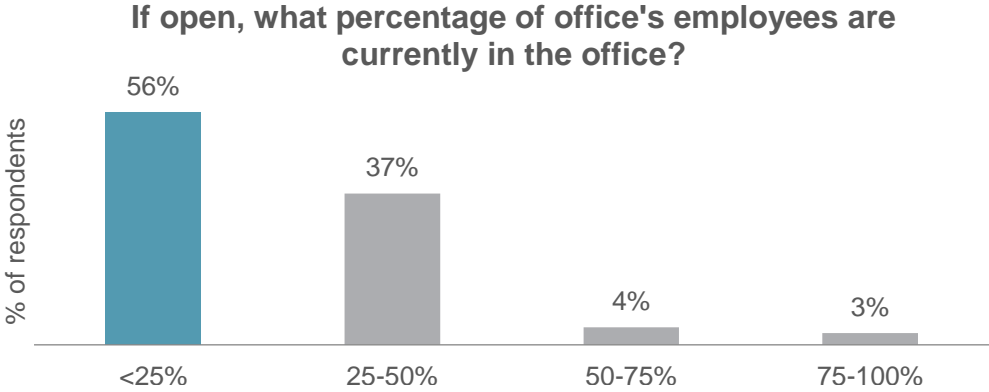
“We’re divided into three groups - each group can be in the office every third day, said another respondent from Wisconsin. “We have indicated which work areas are open based on maintaining 6’

distance and ask everyone to wear masks when they are not at their desk.” Masks being mandatory only when employees are away from their desk was a common theme throughout survey.

Another respondent from Wisconsin explained, “we are reopening with red, white and blue teams. Each team has different days each week to come into the office—but it is still optional.” For the majority of respondents’ firms in the process of reopening, most employees have the option to work from home even if their group is technically in the office that day.

EMPLOYEES IN THE OFFICE

When asked the percentage of employees currently working in the office, 56% of respondents’ firms had less than 25% of employees in the office at the time of the survey. Another 36% of respondents had between 25-50% of employees in the office, which respondents noted varied based on city, state and local guidance. While some firms prioritize “essential” office employees” (such as accounting and executive teams), others are phasing back in groups, giving all employees an opportunity to return to the office.



For firms opening in phases, phase 1 typically limited offices to 20-25% occupancy and occurred in May or June. Many firms will begin phase 2 in July/August, often limited to 50%. While phase 3 varied among respondents, it typically involves transitioning the majority of staff back to the office, but most respondents noted this will not be required, particularly for those with childcare issues, school closures or underlying health conditions.

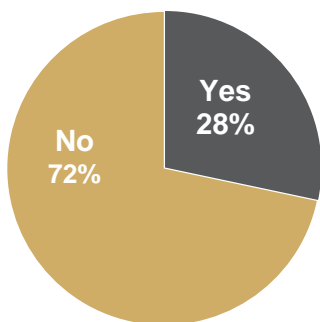
Other firms will not mandate productive employees (regardless of situation) to return and are working on permanent “mechanisms for individuals to extend their work remotely option.” While some respondents estimated the majority of their staff will return before Labor Day, other offices will be closed through the rest of 2020, depending on branch location and state guidelines. It remains unclear how a “second wave” of COVID-19 will impact these transition plans.

TAKING TEMPERATURES

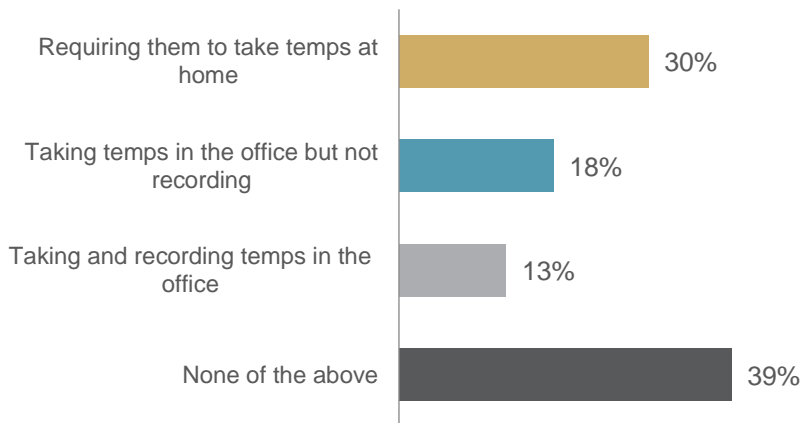
Of those firms that were fully open at the time of the survey, 61% had implemented some form of temperature reading requirement for employees to return to the office. The remainder, 39%, selected “none of the above,” when asked about taking temperatures.

Firms that were measuring employees' temperatures, 30% were simply requiring employees to do this at home before coming in, 13% were taking temperatures in the office and recording the results, while 18% were not recording the results.

If allowing visitors, are you taking their temperatures?



If open, how are you handling employee temperature screenings?

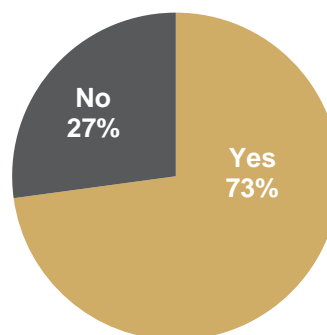


MONITORING EMPLOYEES IN THE OFFICE

Seventy-three percent of respondents' firms were taking some approach to monitor who is in the office, typically to ensure the number does not exceed their current limit. The remaining 27% did not currently have a process in place.

Of those firms that were tracking who comes and goes, several respondents noted their firm is utilizing badge access technologies and other platforms to monitor this digitally. "We've continued the use of our existing OfficeStatus software for employees to show whether working in-office, remotely, on vacation, etc. We were using this program pre-pandemic operations adjustments," said a respondent from Louisiana. Several respondents using technologies also require employees to sign in at the lobby or front desk to monitor more closely.

If open, are you tracking who is in the office?



Respondents taking a more manual approach are monitoring via HR spreadsheet, requesting permission from supervisor, or sending out weekly surveys to sign up. Another respondents' firm required employees to sign up on a shared calendar, sign in when they arrive, and sign out when leaving.

A respondent from Montana explained, "We have a log of "approved" colleagues to be back in the office; have blank lines available if additional colleagues show up during working hours to pick something up briefly. We have a separate visitor log for outside vendors/clients who are entering the office."

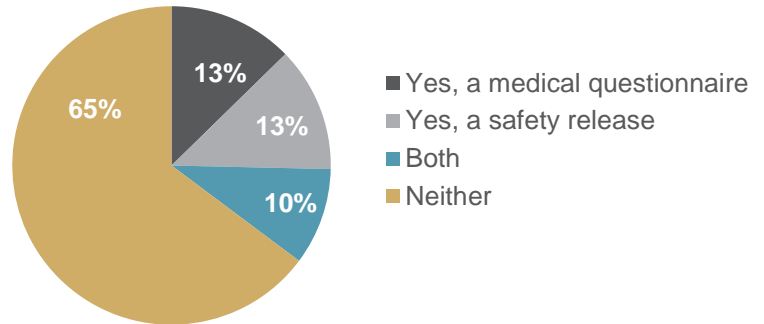
RELEASE FORMS

Respondents were asked if their firms require employees to sign a release form before returning to the office. Thirty-six percent of respondents were doing this in some capacity, with 13% solely requiring a medical questionnaire, 13% requiring just a safety release, and 10% requiring both. Sixty-four percent of respondents' firms are not requiring either release before employees return to the office.

"Working in the office is requested before-the-fact, said a respondent from Illinois. "A health screening app must be downloaded and a questionnaire must be completed prior to entering. Only those who previously were approved to be in the office are allowed in the office. Key card is required for access and only activated for people given permission to go in."

Another respondent from New Jersey said "everyone will check in at front desk to answer 4 quick health questions, and have temperature taken. We'll have up to 50% staff that are able to come in to work on a shift at a time. Will work 1 week in office, 1 week at home. We will be providing masks, safekeys, sanitizer, wipes to everyone that returns to work and are working with individual situations for those unable to return to work due to childcare, health issues etc."

Are you having employees sign a release form before returning to work?

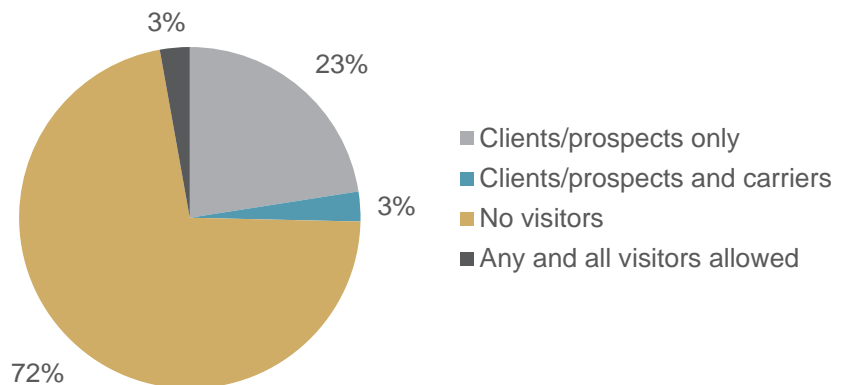


VISITORS IN THE OFFICE

At the time of the survey, 72% of firms were not allowing any visitors in the office, though several respondents noted this is set to change as they enter phase 2. Twenty-three percent of respondents' firms were currently allowing "clients and prospects only," which was typically "by appointment, and limited at that." "Our office is reopening in stages," explained a respondent from Texas, "those that went remote are staying remote at this time, but we have moved into Phase 2 which involves customers to enter our facility (with facemask) and producers to go to a client's location (with proper PPE) when requested."

Of those respondents that are allowing visitors, 72% were not currently taking their temperatures.

Are you allowing visitors in the office?

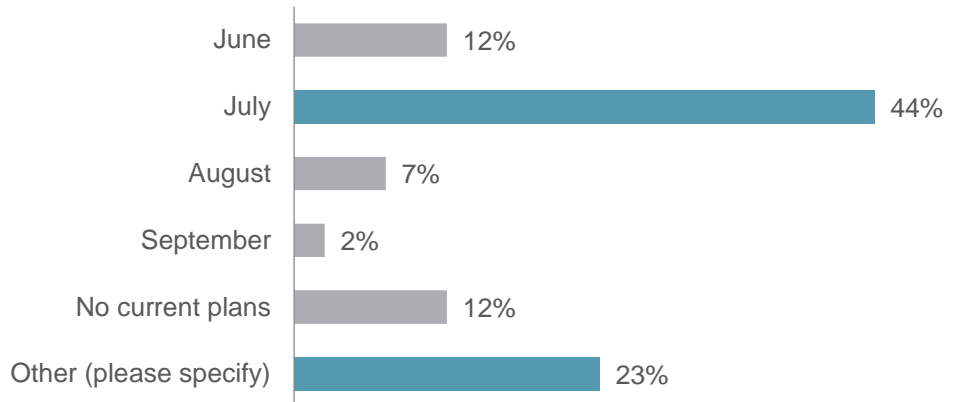


CONCLUSION

All in all, it was evident most firms are taking a cautionary approach and not requiring employees to return to the workplace at any specific date. There was an overwhelming positive consensus among respondents that the majority of employees were effective and productive while working remote. While many firms are adhering to county and state guidelines, this often varies between offices, and most firms will continue to allow workers to do what best suits them, both personally and professionally.

One respondent's firm from Tennessee will be reopening "according to phases advised by governor, but we are purposely lagging behind larger employers in the area to identify any unknown consequences. Note, at this time, we are fully functional remotely, so there is not a significant lift in operations we are expecting when we return to the office."

If your office is not currently open, when do you plan to reopen?



A larger, nation-wide firm has that has 46 offices across the nation has "provided corporate guidelines for a phase 1 re-opening, which is voluntary return to the office, with the decision to re-open the office made on a state-by-state basis following our corporate minimum standards of care plus state/local restrictions and guidelines."

Firms are also taking precautionary measures by installing social distancing signs, floor directional signs, blocking off common areas, instituting cleaning protocols, eliminating common touchpoints, restricting food service in building, and requiring masks when not at desk. At the time of the survey, a typical office had a max capacity between 20 and 30%. Further into the summer, these numbers will likely approach 50%, but coming into work will likely remain optional for many firms.