

Restoring operations in manufacturing

Risk Control services from Liberty Mutual Insurance



Restarting your manufacturing business may present unique challenges. Review the considerations below as you work on your plan.

Crisis management reopening preparations

- Retain documentation and critique the process used to temporarily close and what was undertaken to reopen. You may need to rely on this analysis should there be a resurgence of the COVID-19 virus outbreak. A threat assessment of your operations' vulnerabilities is a vital component to this process.
- Where special replacements are needed to continue work, prepare a succession plan for critical staff and officers.
- Consult with association members to share best practices with questions related to business reopening.
- Verify current permits and licenses to re-open and restart, based on local or state ordinances and mandates during the time your operations have been shut down.

Establish customer and supply chain commitments

- Consider realigning your current supply chain where resource provisions can still be met. Examine your global supplier network, both domestic and foreign. Look at how you determine who your suppliers are and where previous commitments can still meet expectations, including provision of like product or service. Clear any changes through your Quality Assurance and Risk Management functions.
- Explore where past contractual obligations may continue undisrupted and those that need to be reassessed for gaps in fabrication, design, and/or technical support. Use legal counsel to oversee risk transfer provisions reflected in contractual expectations that can be promptly deployed should a supplier defect be later discovered.
- Restoring supplier specs will require scrutiny on your product quality, influenced by those supplied materials. This also directly affects your product liability risk when substandard parts are used.
- Verify where customer specifications call out machines and materials to use, that may include changes within your supply inventory. In some cases, this may involve health risks to your workforce due to changes in chemical makeup or overall job safety risks. Address these concerns before resuming production.

Commission machines, equipment, and processes

- Can old equipment still fulfill customer expectations? U.S. manufacturers can expect a resurgence in automation and robotics, perhaps at an even greater rate than previously forecasted. With global supply fulfillment in question, many U.S. manufacturers are re-shoring their processes in anticipation of quicker turnaround time, reduced expenses (e.g., shipping time, tariffs, and other fees), and compromised product quality.
- Ensure a complete follow-through of residual power controls of all forms, including fluid sources in machines, building support, and process piping systems. Examine effects of idle time on conditions and performance, such as deterioration, corrosion, seal damage, leaks or ruptures, etc. Confirm that machine safety performance has been verified before restoring to full production by revisiting your risk assessments that detail safeguarding systems in use.
- Restarting processes can present new and unique operational risk to workers. This could be the first time workers have restarted equipment from a dormant state and they may not be aware of the hazards. Follow restart procedures for idled equipment using the equipment manufacturers guidance, if available.
- Do your critically skilled workers need training to address changes in product line changes or customer demands? Address skills needed to setup, maintain, and run critical tasks for those workers you recall for reopening. If you are exploring more automation or a significantly different process, specify job skills using your HR department to help fill gaps.
- Revisit your hazardous energy control plan to ensure it is understood and practiced. Revisit alternative measures when power may be necessary to clear jams, make adjustments, or perform other tasks not possible without some form of controlled power.
- Implement a sustainable workplace cleaning and disinfection process based on operational needs. At a minimum, clean after each shift concludes and before the next one begins. Consider a contracted service provider who specializes in that work. Continue to follow CDC and local guidance affecting cleaning protocol and how it complies.
- If contractual obligations and production demands have changed, reexamine changes in applicable consensus standards affecting product safety within necessary design improvements or fabrication processes.

Workforce preparedness and communications

- Follow CDC and OSHA guidance for workplace safety and health.
- Consider and address the needs and concerns of the returning workforce. Expand opportunities for workers to have input on problems and concerns.
- Clearly communicate the plan to ensure their health and safety, including social distancing precautions, personal protective equipment, cleaning, disinfecting, hand washing expectations/procedures.
- Consider that worker stamina may have been affected by the layoff and a transition period may be needed to allow workers to re-acclimate to highly repetitive physically demanding tasks.
- Shift work sleep patterns may have been disrupted during downtime, so plan carefully for restarting shift work.
- Use pre-shift safety meetings to communicate updates and respond to concerns.

Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) security

- Using a cross-functional team of high-level workers, examine the move of secured data access from the home work environment to company sites, accounting for all users and equipment (hardware and software) and any transactional data and highly sensitive information.
- Appoint a key functional role responsible for verifying data acquisition and security before production processes are re-commissioned. This likely will involve a risk assessment to identify security gaps in data transmission so that startup can begin in a safe manner.

Building condition and functional capability

- Assess changes in neighborhood dynamics that may now pose a threat to your business or property since your business has been closed (e.g., traffic patterns, yard storage, and security, lighting, etc.).
- Verify that building security and fire protection features are fully operational and that service agreements can be renewed without gaps. Obtain inspections from authorities that conditions are favorable for opening.
- Re-examine life safety provisions to verify safe and clear egress and unobstructed exit paths throughout the building. Note that your exit routes will now need to account for social distancing minimum spacing.
- Assess the physical condition of your building and outside storage, lots, etc.
- Assure proper working order of critical services preservation (HVAC, fire suppression, CO detection, life safety, alarms, etc.)
- If you intend to provide onsite food services you will need supplies and a safe means of preparing and storing for short and long-term sustainability.



Looking for more comprehensive safety information? As a policyholder, you have exclusive access to risk control tools and resources through Liberty Mutual SafetyNet™ – visit lmi.co/safetynet

For more information, contact your local service director or the Risk Control Consulting Center. Email anytime – RCConsultingCenter@LibertyMutual.com – or call 1-866-757-7324, Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern.



Your safety and well-being are our primary concern. These suggestions are general in nature, so please ensure that any activities you contemplate comply with all federal, state, and local COVID-19 orders impacting your facilities or operations as well as CDC guidelines for social distancing, hygiene, and other recommended best practices.

Our risk control services are advisory only. We assume no responsibility for: managing or controlling customer safety activities, implementing any recommended corrective measures, or identifying all potential hazards. No attempt has been made to interpret any referenced codes, standards, or regulations. Please refer to the appropriate government authority for interpretation or clarification.

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